

Charles County, Maryland Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

September 2017



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County Mission Statement:

“The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility. We support and encourage efforts to grow a diverse workplace.”

County Vision Statement:

“Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.”

It is the policy of Charles County to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religious or political affiliation or opinion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other status protected by law.

Executive Summary

This update of the Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan for 2017 serves two primary functions:

1. It maintains County eligibility to receive annual grant funding from Maryland's Program Open Space – an important source of funding for enhancement of the County parks system.
2. The updated Plan provides key information, goals, and achievable recommendations to guide the County's management and enhancement of its parks, recreation facilities, and open space assets for the next five years.

\$1,478,975

*Program Open Space Local
side contributions in Charles
County since 2012*

Planning Process Summary

Information, ideas, and inspiration for the goals and recommendations of this Plan were gathered through a strategic planning process that began in late 2016 and is due to be completed by September 2017. Key components of the planning process consisted of:

- Data collection and analysis
- Study of trends, demographics, and participation in recreation
- Staff and stakeholder engagement
- Open link (web based) survey
- Level of service analysis
- Draft and Final Plan preparation and approvals

The planning program was led by a core project team of County staff from the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, the Department of Planning and Growth Management, and consulting firm GreenPlay, LLC.

Key Issues Summary

Charles County made significant progress toward achieving state and local goals for parks and recreation, natural resource land conservation, and agricultural land preservation set in 2012. A summary of progress made from 2012-2017 to meet goals is referenced in each section of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. Major achievements and persistent challenges from 2012 through June 2017 included the following.

Parks and Recreation

Accomplishment

- Established the new Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.
- Land/facility acquisition for future Multi-Generational Activity Center (Waldorf Area).

Challenge

- Public use and demand for athletic fields exceed the system's field capacity.
- Acquisition of waterfront sites suitable for public water access development.

Natural Resource Land Conservation

Accomplishment

- Partnered with Maryland DNR to prepare the report "Accounting for Ecosystem Services in Charles County, Maryland," Draft under review in 2017.
- Protected 1,000+ additional acres in priority areas for conservation.

Challenge

- Limited local funding for large scale land preservation.

Agricultural Land Preservation

Accomplishment

- Increased MALPF investment in Charles County since 2012.

Challenge

- TDR program has not been revised as was a goal in 2012. The 2016 County Comprehensive Plan includes a goal to update the TDR program.

The existing system of public parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities contribute to the high quality of life of residents and attract visitors to Charles County. This infrastructure serves to protect important regional natural resources and local cultural landscapes, and provides abundant opportunities for anyone to participate in a wide array of recreation activities, engage with the natural environment and rural landscape, and enjoy the local history and culture that makes Charles County a fantastic place to live, work, and play.

Goals and Recommendations

Goals of the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan focus on improving the County's provision of public parks and recreation amenities and initiatives to preserve lands of high agricultural and natural resource value. Natural Resource Land Conservation and Agricultural Land Preservation Goals are identical to those of the County's current Comprehensive Plan. Goals for Parks and Recreation were developed in response to needs identified through a level of service analysis.

Parks and Recreation Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to maintain and develop parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, and programming to meet the diverse needs of a growing resident and visitor user base.• Develop new parks, recreation facilities, and associated amenities where existing demand appears to be exceeding the capacity of the existing parks and recreation system.• Continue to build an interconnected system of trails and paths throughout the County for non-automotive use.
Natural Resource Land Conservation Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain a safe and healthy environment by protecting air, water, and land resources, and preventing the degradation of those resources from pollutants.• Protect 50% of Charles County as open space.• Implement and enforce the County's Critical Area Program, which is designed to foster more sensitive development along the shoreline so as to minimize damage to water quality and wildlife habitats.• Preserve and enforce the Resource Protection Zone as a buffer to ensure protection of sensitive inland and environmental features in stream valleys outside the Critical Area, such as the Mattawoman Creek, Zekiah Swamp Run, Gilbert Swamp Run, Port Tobacco River, Nanjemoy, Swanson, and Indian Creek watersheds.• Protect the habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species to maintain their long-term survival and biodiversity.• Conserve large tracts of contiguous forestland and forest interior dwelling bird habitat (FIDS) determined to be of significance due to their value for wildlife habitat, water quality, and air quality.• Promote awareness of environmental issues through public outreach, public access, and educational programs to cultivate a basic understanding of the natural environment and its valuable resources.• Provide public access to open space, forestland, and the waterfront as an amenity to an enhanced quality of life.
Agricultural Land Preservation Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are core targeted industries essential for job creation and the future quality of life of County residents. Minimize conflicts with other uses, especially residential.• Maintain the farmers' rights to farm.• Support marketing programs for the County's diverse agricultural offerings.• Assist farmers to maintain an economically viable agricultural and forest industry.• Support the ability of commercial watermen and recreational fishermen to have access to sustainable fisheries.• Focus agricultural preservation programs to those areas with a land use and zoning of agricultural conservation and designated priority preservation areas.

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I. Introduction and Background Information

A. Purpose of this Plan

This update of the Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan for 2017 serves two primary functions:

1. Maintains County eligibility to participate in Maryland's Program Open Space – local and annual state grant funding program used to improve County parks and recreation assets.
2. Provides key information, goals, and achievable recommendations to guide the County's management and enhancement of its system of public parks, open spaces, and preserved lands for the next five years.

Charles County relies on annual grant funding from Program Open Space for open space land acquisition and parks and recreation facility improvements. Completion of a regular five-year update to the County's Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan is a prerequisite for the County's continued participation in the Localside Program (per *Section 5-905[b][2] of the Natural Resources Article- Annotated Code of Maryland*). This update to the County's Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, once adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 2017, shall replace the previous version approved in 2012.

\$1,478,975
Total Program Open Space Local-side matching grants used to enhance public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces in Charles County since 2012.

As with previous versions of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, this document provides updated information on programs, goals, and issues impacting Charles County's provision of public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. The 2017 update has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- State of Maryland 2017 "Statewide Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines"
- State of Maryland Program Open Space statutory requirements

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan focus areas:

1. Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
2. Natural Resource Land Conservation
3. Agricultural Land Preservation

The 2017 "Statewide Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines" issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in 2015 included new planning criteria for counties to follow. In comparison to the "2012 Guidelines" utilized to prepare the County's previous plan, the most substantive changes included in the 2017 planning criteria included:

1. Parks and Recreation
 - a. Focus on completing a comprehensive "Level of Service" analysis of the County's parks and open space system to determine how well it appears to meeting the recreational needs of the community and local users.
 - b. Establish goals enhancing the County's parks and open space assets based on land, facility, and program needs identified through the Level of Service Analysis.

- c. Retirement of the default statewide goal for counties to provide at least 30 acres per 1,000 population. Park and recreation acquisition and facility goals are to be tied to service needs and no longer based on the past default goal and acreage calculations.
2. Natural Resource Land Conservation
 - a. Update only of relevant program data, inventories, and goals. No new analysis required.
3. Agricultural Land Preservation
 - a. Update only of relevant program data, inventories, and goals. No new analysis required.

Relationship with County and State Guiding Plans and Documents

Upon adoption by the County Commission, this updated Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan becomes a part of the County's current 2016 "Comprehensive Plan" by reference. Adoption of this updated plan is anticipated by September 2017, and upon adoption, it will replace the 2012 "Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan" as the detailed guiding document for parks, open space, and recreation planning in the County for the next five years. The goals and recommendations of the 2017 "Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan" are supportive of County and State plans, programs, and shared goals including those established by:

State:

- 2014 Statewide Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
- Program Open Space
- GreenPrint
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Program
- Maryland 20-Year Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan



County:

- 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan
- 2012 Tourism Destination Study Plan
- 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Various Land Use Plans and Studies



B. Planning Process and Public Engagement

Preparation of the 2017 Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan was led by the County's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, and GreenPlay, LLC, with significant input and assistance of staff from the Department of Planning and Growth Management.

Planning Process Summary and Schedule

- **September 2016** – Project Start, Background Data Collection
- **October – November 2016** – Data analysis, Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, Online Survey
- **December 2016 – April 2017** – Data Analysis, Preparation of Draft Plan
- **April – July 2017** – Draft Plan Review with County and State Officials
- **September 2017** – Final Plan prepared for adoption by Board of County Commissioners

Review and Consideration of Guiding Plans, Programs, and Information

The planning process for 2017 “Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan” began with a review of existing guiding plans, programs, and data resources relevant to the provision of public parks, recreation amenities, and open space assets in Charles County. Current guiding documents, plans, and information considered during the update of this Plan included, but was not limited to:

County

- 2016 Comprehensive Plan
- 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- 2012 Tourism Destination Study
- 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan
- Various Land Use Studies and Plans

State

- Maryland 2014 Statewide Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources – 2016 Annual Acreage Report
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources – 2017 LPPRP Guidelines and Resource Documents
- Maryland Department of Planning – State Data Center
- Maryland Department of Planning – Protected Lands Reporting Site
- Maryland Department of Agriculture – MALPF Program
- Maryland Department of Transportation – 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Staff, Stakeholder, and Public Participation

Ideas, information, and perceptions of the current parks, recreation, and open space assets and programs managed by the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism were collected through a series of staff and stakeholder focus group meetings, representing the points of view of different parks and recreation system service providers and user groups including youth and adult sports, cultural and historical groups, and open space advocates. In addition to these meetings, an online survey, open for all to participate, was hosted by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism from November 1 – 30, 2016. Over 1,000 responses were submitted by members of the public, providing insight into the respondents’ perceptions of the quality of public parks and recreation amenities, programs, and levels of funding for these services.

Summary of Staff Participation

County staff recognized the tremendous value that parks, recreation facilities and programs, and protected open spaces provided for residents and visitors of Charles County. Staff contributed to the update of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan with expertise on issues that impact the provision and management of public lands and facilities. County departments and agencies that participated in this planning process included the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism; the Department of Planning and Growth Management; County Administration; the Department of Community Services Aging and Senior Programs; and others.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Eight stakeholder focus groups were hosted on November 15 and 16, 2016 in which the project team led discussions with representatives of public and private organizations, institutions, and individuals with direct ties to, and interests in, the County's system of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces. Stakeholders invited to participate included representatives of sports leagues and programs that utilize county facilities; participants in and providers of outdoor recreation and natural resource based recreation opportunities; local historic, cultural preservation, and land conservation groups; indoor sports groups; and staff from different agencies within Charles County government who share in the provision of public recreation services. Findings from stakeholder engagement sessions are detailed in **Section II: Parks, Recreation, and Tourism**.

Public Participation – Public Meetings and Open Link Survey

Opportunities for the public to share their ideas and opinions about this Plan and the County's parks, recreation, and open space infrastructure were provided through:

- Public Meetings
 - Planning Commission – May 8, May 22, June 5, and July 10, 2017
 - County Commission – July 18, 2017 and September 12, 2017
- Open Link, online survey – November 1 – 30, 2016

To allow for easy public participation in the planning process, an open link, or online survey, was hosted through the County's website by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism in November 2016. The survey included 16 questions focused on gauging respondents' usage and visitation of County parks and recreation sites, perception of amenity quality and accessibility, and how they believe public investment should be leveraged to improve the quality of the County's system of parks, recreation facilities, and open space assets.

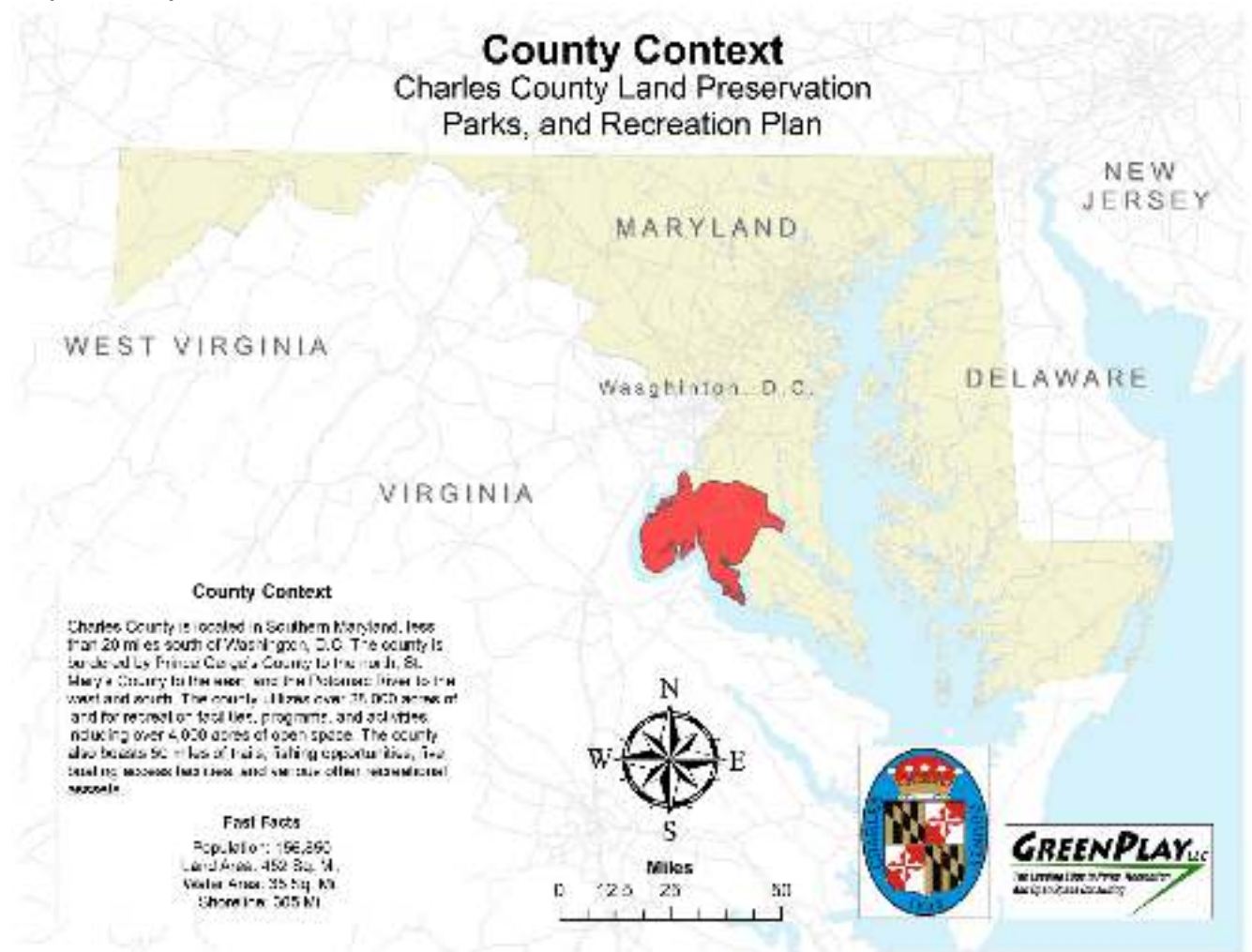
From November 1 – 30, 2016, the survey received over 1,000 responses. Key findings are discussed in **Section II: Parks, Recreation, and Tourism** with a full reporting of findings included in **Appendix C: Survey Summary Report**.

C. County Character

Geographic Character

Charles County is approximately 458 square miles in land area and located in southern Maryland, less than 20 miles south of Washington D.C. As illustrated in **Map 1**, the County is bordered to the north by Prince George's County, St. Mary's County to the east, and the Potomac River to the west and south.

Map 1: County Context

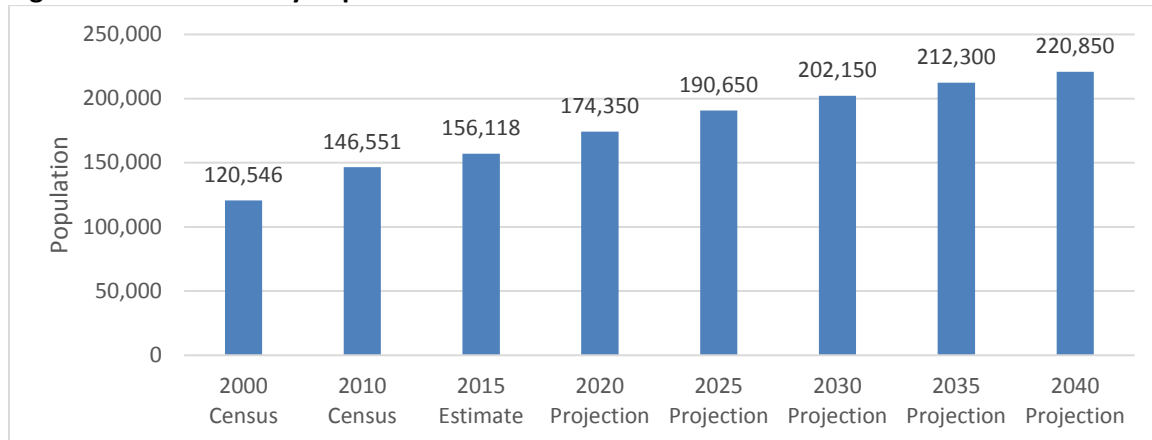


Source: GreenPlay, LLC

Demographic Highlights

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning indicate that Charles County has been experiencing steady population growth, with that trend projected to continue through at least 2040. The 2015 County population was estimated to be 156,118.

Figure 1: Charles County Population Growth Trend



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Table 1 summarizes several key general demographic traits of the County's population. The 2015 median age of Charles County residents was in line with that of the statewide and national populations. Median household income in Charles County in 2015 was estimated to be approximately \$15,000 higher than the statewide median household income, and over \$36,000 greater than that of households nationwide.

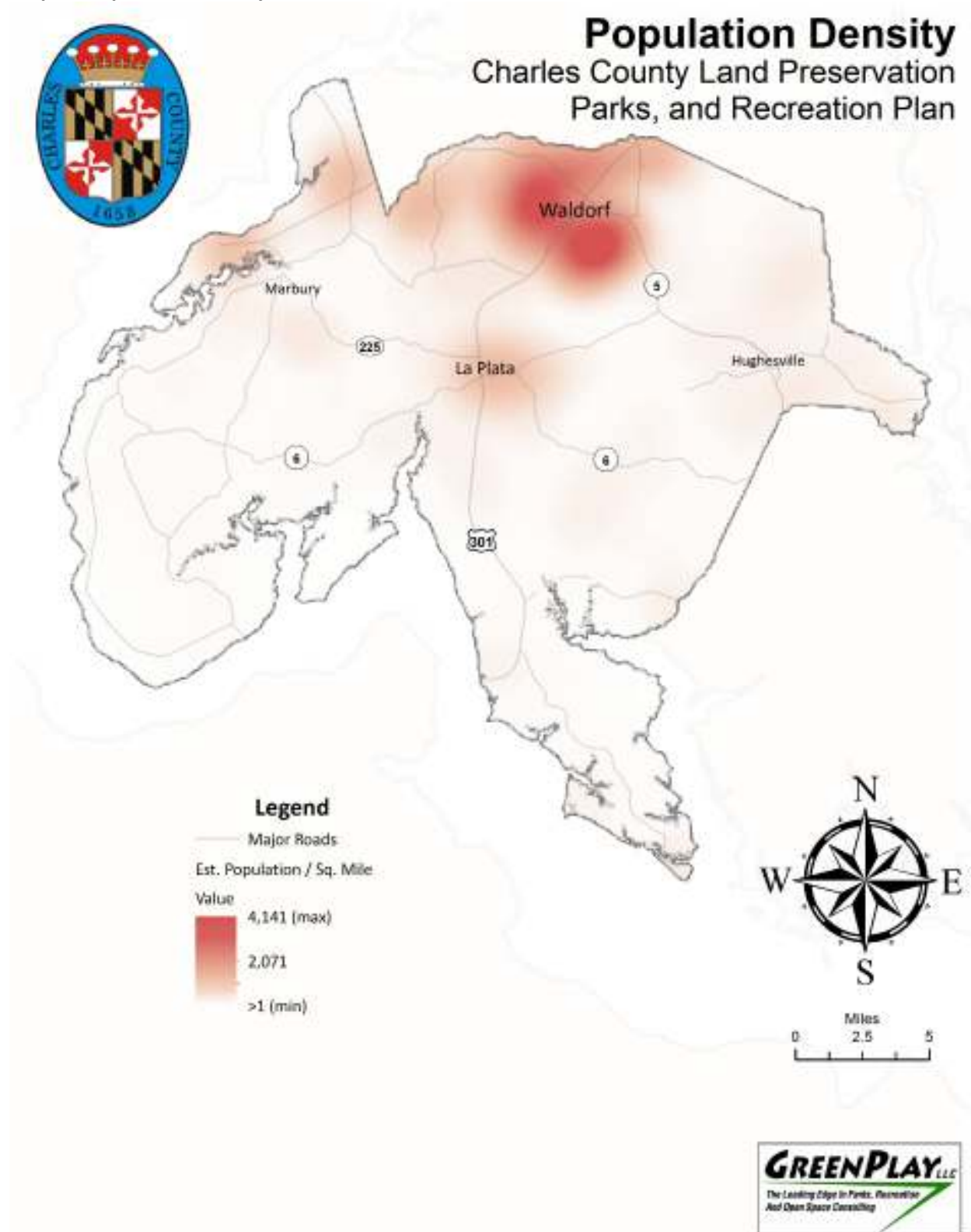
Table 1: 2015 Charles County General Demographic Profile

Population	156,118
Median Age	37.8
Households	55,375
Median Household Income	\$90,607

Source: Maryland Department of Planning and American Community Survey

As illustrated by the red highlighted areas on **Map 2**, the most densely populated area of the County is in and around Waldorf, followed by the La Plata area. Population density throughout the rest of the County was less dense.

Map 2 - Population Density



Source: GreenPlay, LLC

Completed as a component of the updated to the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, **Appendix B** provides a full report on current population and demographic trends that tend to influence the provision of public parks and recreation services in Charles County.

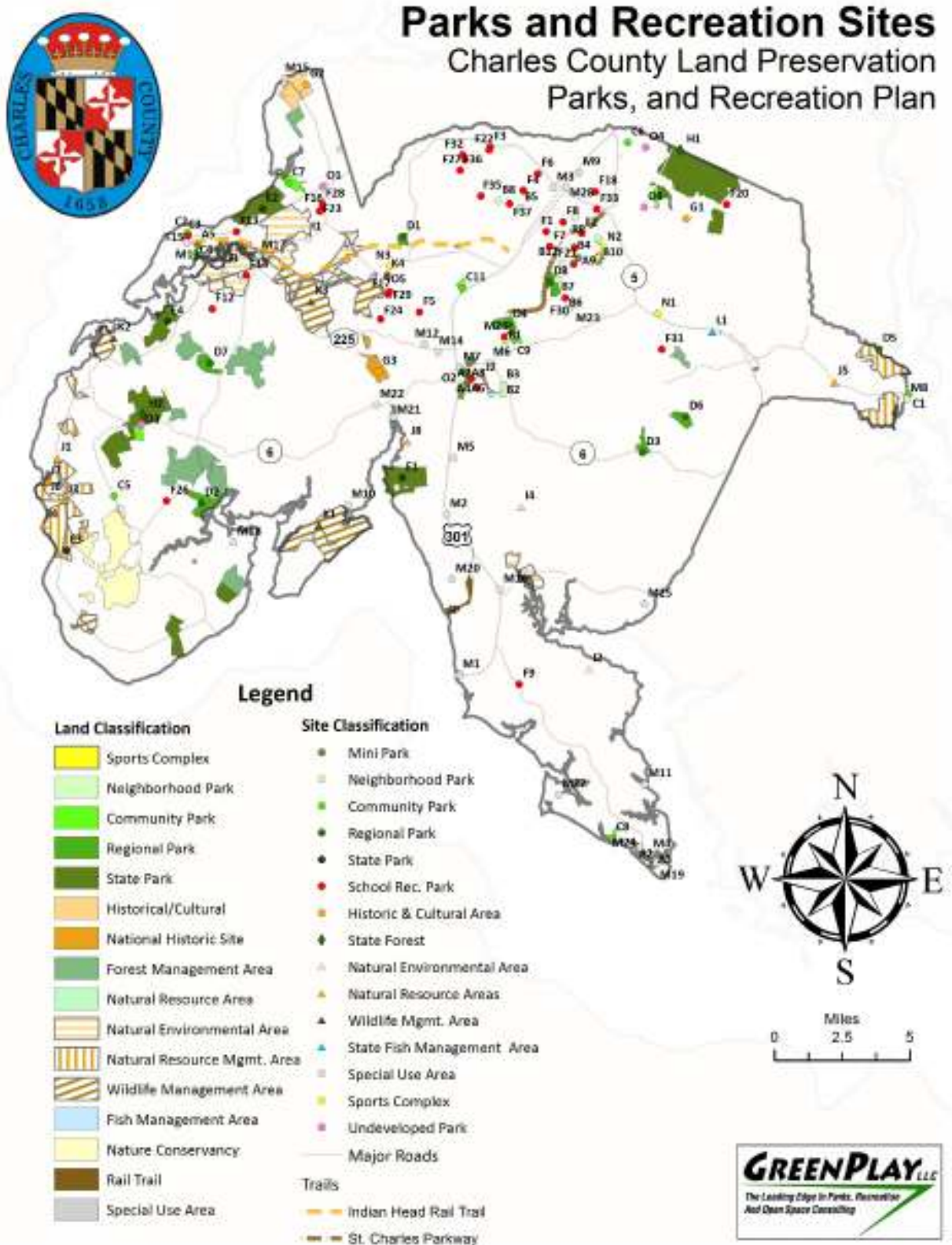
In 2015, Charles County residents were generally:

- **A youthful and growing population, with an average median age of less than 40 years.**
- **Earning more per household than peers statewide and nationally.**
- **Educated, with 92% of adults graduating high school, and over 27% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher.**

D. Public Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Spaces in Charles County

The existing system of public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces in Charles County, as illustrated in **Map 3** includes a diversity of assets and amenities that provide a wide range of opportunities for public participation in recreational, cultural, fitness, and leisure activities. The map includes both public, and some private/quasi-public parks and recreation sites, all of which provide some public access and/or use of their recreation amenities and opportunities. As of March 2017, there were over 28,000 acres of parks, recreation areas, and open spaces in Charles County that provided opportunities for public recreation, as detailed in **Appendix D**. A detailed, updated inventory of County and State Department of Natural Resources parks, open spaces, and facilities that provide public recreation opportunities is included as **Appendix D**. A thorough review of the existing public parks, recreation, and open space system in Charles County is discussed in **Section II: Parks, Recreation, and Tourism**.

Map 3 – Charles County Public Park and Recreation Sites



Source: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

Public parks and recreation sites in Charles County include:

Parks

Mini Park

A1 – Carroll La Plata Village
A2 – Cobb Island Park
A3 – Cobb Island Playground
A4 – Hemlock Court
A5 – Meekins
A6 – Patuxent Court Mini-Park
A7 – Phoenix Run Park I
A8 – Phoenix Run Park II
A9 – St. Charles - St. Paul's Lake
A10 – Star Memorial Garden
A11 – Train Station

Neighborhood

B1 – Agricopia Park
B2 – Redwood Lake
B3 – Silver Linden Park
B4 – St. Charles - Bannister Neighborhood Center
B5 – St. Charles - Dorchester Community Center
B6 – St. Charles - Fieldside Community Center
B7 – St. Charles - Gleneagles Community Center
B8 – St. Charles - Hampshire Community Center
B9 – St. Charles - Huntington Community Ctr.
B10 – St. Charles - Lambeth Hill Lake
B11 – St. Charles - Lancaster Community Center
B12 – St. Charles - Sheffield Community Center
B13 – St. Charles - Wakefield Community Ctr.
B14 – St. Charles - Wakefield Lake
B15 – Woodland Village Neighborhood Park

Community

C1 – Benedict Community Park
C2 – Charlie Wright Park
C3 – Indian Head Village Green and Senior Center
C4 – Mattingly Park
C5 – Nanjemoy Community Center
C6 – Pinefield Park

Public School Recreation Areas

F1 – Arthur Middleton ES
F2 – Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert Community Center
F3 – Berry ES
F4 – C. Paul Barnhart ES
F5 – College of Southern Maryland
F6 – Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES
F7 – Dr. Gustavus Brown ES
F8 – Dr. Samuel Mudd ES
F9 – Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center
F10 – Eva Turner ES
F11 – F.B. Gwynn Center
F12 – Gale Bailey ES
F13 – General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center
F14 – Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool
F15 – Indian Head ES
F16 – J.C. Parks ES
F17 – James Craik ES
F18 – John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School
F19 – La Plata HS & Pool and Matula ES
F20 – Malcolm ES
F21 – Mary Burgess Neal ES
F22 – Mattawoman MS and Mattawoman Community Center
F23 – Matthew Henson MS and Henson Community Center
F24 – Maurice McDonough HS and Pool
F25 – Milton M. Somers MS and Somers Community Center
F26 – Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES
F27 – North Point HS & Community Pool
F28 – Pomonkey Soccer Complex
F29 – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center
F30 – St. Charles HS & Community Pool
F31 – T.C. Martin ES

J2 – Clark Run Natural Area
J3 – Douglas Point State NRMA
J4 – Douglass Point Special Recreation Area- BLM
J5 – Indian Creek NRMA
J6 – Mallows Bay Park
J7 – Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area
J8 –Port Tobacco River Park
Wildlife Mgmt. Area
K1 – Cedar Point WMA
K2 – Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area
K3 – Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area
K4 – Pomfret Resource Area
State Fish Mgmt. Area
L1 – Hughesville Pond Fish Management Area
Special Use Area
M1 – Aqua Land Campgrounds and Marina
M2 – Bel Alton High School
M3 – Capital Clubhouse
M4 – Captain John's Marina
M5 – Charles County Fairgrounds
M6 – Clark Senior Center
M7 – Courthouse Soccer Field
M8 – Desoto/Benedict Marina, Inc.
M9 – Elite Gymnastics & Recreation Center
M10 – Goose Bay Marina and Campsites
M11 – Hatton Creek Boat Ramp
M12 – Hawthorne Country Club
M13 – Indian Head Rail Trail
M14 – La Plata Park (Legion Fields)
M15 – Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility
M16 – Maryland Veterans Museum
M17 – Mason Springs Soft Access Area
M18 – Nanjemoy Creek Preserve
M19 – Pirates Dens Marina
M20 – Pope's Creek Rail Trail
M21 – Port Tobacco Marina and Campground

C7 – Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park
 C8 – Southern Park
 C9 – Tilghman Lake Park
 C10 – Town Hall Park
 C11 – Turkey Hill Park
 C12 – Wills Memorial Park

Regional

D1 – Bensville Park
 D2 – Friendship Farm Park
 D3 – Gilbert Run Park
 D4 – Laurel Springs Park
 D5 – Maxwell Hall Park
 D6 – Oak Ridge Park
 D7 – Pisgah Park
 D8 – White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E1 – Chapel Point State Park
 E2 – Chapman State Park
 E3 – Purse State Park
 E4 – Smallwood State Park

F32 – Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center
 F33 – Thomas Stone HS and Pool
 F34 – Walter J. Mitchell ES
 F35 – Westlake HS
 F36 – William A. Diggs ES
 F37 – William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

Historic/Cultural

G1 – Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House
 G2 – Piscataway Park
 G3 – Thomas Stone National Landmark

State Forest

H1 – Cedarville State Forest
 H2 – Doncaster State Forest

Natural Environmental Area

I1 – Governor Glendening Natural Environmental Area
 I2 – Grove Natural Environmental Area
 I3 – Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area
 I4 – Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area

Natural Resource Area

J1 – Ben Doane Area - Nanjemoy WMA

M22 – Port Tobacco Recreation Center

M23 – Regency Stadium
 M24 – Saunders Marina
 M25 – Southern MD ATV Park
 M26 – Spring Dell Center
 M27 – Swann Point Golf Course
 M28 – Waldorf Senior Center

Sports Complex

N1 – Bryantown Soccer Complex
 N2 – Robert Stethem Park
 N3 – Southern Md Youth Org Inc. Fields

Undeveloped Park

O1 – Bryans Road Park
 O2 – La Plata Farm Park
 O3 – Nanjemoy Community Park
 O4 – Pinefield Future School Site
 O5 – Pomfret Park
 O6 – Waldorf Park

E. Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Accomplishments Since 2012

Since the last update of this Plan in 2012, the County has worked to achieve goals and objectives for parks and recreation, natural resource land conservation, and agricultural land preservation. Goals from the 2012 Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan are noted below, with corresponding work completed to achieve that goal through June 2017.

Parks and Recreation Evaluation of Actions and Strategies from the 2012 Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan

Four goals, each with a series of objectives and policies were established in 2012 to guide the management and enhancement of Charles County's system of public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. Major accomplishments and challenges noted in the County's work to achieve 2012 goals included:

1. Create a physical and social environment which accommodates the recreational needs and interests of all County Residents.

Through the creation of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, Charles County consolidated resources and strengthened its ability to manage existing assets and programs and to guide the future enhancement of the County parks system and provision of services. The newly formed Department has increased outreach and engagement with existing users, stakeholders, and community at-large to regularly gauge needs. The Department also regularly coordinates on land acquisition and preservation efforts with other County and State agencies.

2. Seek to provide 30 acres of parks, recreation, and open space land per 1,000 population, consistent with State goals.

In 2017 there were 28,140 acres of publicly accessible parks, recreation sites, and open spaces throughout Charles County. This is an increase of approximately 200 acres of parks and recreation land since 2012. As the State of Maryland no longer utilizes the 30 acres/1,000 population metric as a goal for a county's provision of park land, an updated assessment toward achieving this goal was not conducted.

3. Provide a range of leisure, recreational, and cultural programs and facilities that are accessible and affordable to all County residents.

As reported by The 2016 Annual Report to the Citizens of Charles County:

- *Nearly 8,000 registrations for Recreation Division programs including aquatics, gymnastics, sports, fitness classes, and summer camp programs.*
- *3,480 participants in County senior center programs, including the Indian Head Senior Center which was recognized for excellence in its programs promoting nutrition, fitness, and health.*
- *The Celebrate Charles series of annual special events hosted by the County saw high attendance. The Fun Filled Fourth event was attended by over 10,000 participants, and FallFest attendance was estimated at over 5,000.*
- *The County's Crain Memorial Welcome Center received nearly 90,000 visitors.*

In addition to the County's annual report, data tracked by the County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism for the period of October 2015 to August 2016 (11 months) reported:

- *9,277 average monthly participants in Recreation Division sports programs.*
- *102,047 total participants in Recreation Division sports programs.*
- *16,210 recreation activity registrations with an average of 1,474 registrations per month.*
- *Nearly 21,000 visitors to historic sites.*

4. Develop a high-quality public parks and recreation system with adequate space and facilities, providing an appropriate mix of recreation activities for County residents.
The most current accomplishment toward reaching this goal was achieved in June 2017, with the County's acquisition of a site and facility in the Waldorf area. The existing facility is planned to be renovated and repurposed as a new home for the existing Waldorf Senior Center, and as a new community center, to provide recreation and community programming for residents of all ages. This future new center will be a joint operation of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and the Department of Community Services, Aging, and Senior Programs Division. This shared space is envisioned to include multipurpose rooms and meeting spaces, fitness room, group exercise studios, and a gymnasium. When completed, this center will fill a long standing need for such a facility in the Waldorf area to provide year round community activities and programs.

Survey results and focus group findings obtained in the preparation of the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan indicated that residents were generally satisfied with the facilities and programs provided by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. However, as was identified in the 2012 Plan, findings of the 2017 Plan indicate significant challenges have lingered in the provision of sufficient quantity of regularly available, high quality athletic fields. Additionally, opportunities to acquire waterfront land suitable for the development of new waterfront recreation opportunities were rare, a challenge likely to remain applicable into the future.

Natural Resource Land Conservation Evaluation of Actions and Strategies from the 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

The 2006 and 2012 Plans both outlined a program development strategy that contained seven elements to protect natural lands and resources. The following is an evaluation of each element:

1. Develop a Green Infrastructure strategy.
The County has not developed a formal green infrastructure strategy. However, the County has partnered with the MD Department of Natural Resources to conduct an assessment of all of the County's Ecosystem Services. The valuation is expected to communicate and acknowledge the economic contributions of natural lands, which can be thought of as the "return on environment" that natural lands provide for County residents. The report, titled "Accounting for Ecosystem Services in Charles County, Maryland," is in final draft form and being reviewed by DNR.
2. Create a natural resource land conservation focus area.
As part of the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan, a Priority Preservation Area (PPA) was adopted which includes 134,168 acres, or 45% of the County. The PPA is rich in productive agricultural and natural resource lands and provides for a focus for the County's preservation efforts.
3. Seek to protect 50 percent of the County in open space.
The goal to protect 50% of the County in open space remains in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the 2017 LPPRP. The county tracts protected lands and publishes a Protected Lands Map annually. As of December 2016, 95,152 acres were considered protected, approximately 64% of the goal and 32% of the total County land area.

4. Focus special attention on protecting the Mattawoman Stream Valley and Mattawoman Watershed.

To guide future development in accordance with smart growth principles and to better protect sensitive natural resources, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan established a land use designation of Watershed Conservation District over 37,455 acres of the County, including most the Mattawoman Watershed and Mattawoman Stream Valley. To implement this protection designation, on June 6, 2017, the County Commissioners adopted a zoning text and zoning map amendment that re-zoned 35,000 acres of this area to Watershed Conservation District Zone which sets a residential density of one unit per 20 acres and generally limits impervious surface to 8%. This was a significant step toward long term protection of the Mattawoman Creek.

5. Strengthen efforts to reduce the impacts of rural development on natural resources in rural parts of the County.

The County Commissioners adopted a “Tier Map” on April 29, 2014, which was revised with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan on July 12, 2016. The map includes 191,194 acres (65%) of the County as Tier IV, limiting this area to minor subdivisions (7 lots or less). This action, in conjunction with the newly adopted Watershed Conservation District Zone, will substantially reduce rural development and associated impacts to natural resources.

6. Continue protection of the Zekiah Watershed Rural Legacy Area. Since the 2012 LPPRP, the County has protected an additional 1,000 acres through the Rural Legacy Program. This included grant funding through Rural Legacy and County allocated funding for easement acquisition. The total land to date protected through the Rural Legacy Program alone is 3,707 acres with a total of 8,353 acres in the Rural Legacy Area under conservation easement or public ownership for conservation and open space purposes.

7. Increase the pace of capital projects and program development activities for eco-tourism and resource-based recreation.

In June of 2016, the County hired a Chief of Tourism and Special Events. Additionally, In July 2016, a new Department of Recreation Parks and Tourism was established. This new Department will be greater equipped to focus efforts on program development around activities for eco-tourism and resource based recreation. Projects like the Popes Creek Trail is an example of ongoing efforts in this area.

In the FY 2018 Budget, the County Commissioners created a new position within the County’s Economic Development Department. The position title is “Agriculture Business Development Manager” and will be responsible for developing, implementing, and administering programs and initiatives to promote, market, and enhance the County’s agricultural industry. Creating this type of position has been a long standing recommendation from previous and current Comprehensive Plans. The position is expected to be hired in July 2017.

Agricultural Land Preservation Evaluation of Actions and Strategies from the 2012 Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan

The 2006 and 2012 Plans both outlined a program development strategy that contained seven elements to protect natural lands and resources. The following is an evaluation of each element:

1. Adopt a target area for agricultural land preservation.
As part of the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan, a Priority Preservation Area (PPA) was adopted which includes 134,168 acres, or 45% of the County. The PPA is rich in productive agricultural and natural resource lands and provides for a focus for the County's preservation efforts. Historically, landowner interest in land preservation has been high within the PPA for the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program and the County's TDR Program, both of which target productive farm and forest land for protection.
2. Adopt funding mechanisms to support agricultural preservation, including a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.
On November 18, 2014, the County Commissioners amended Chapter 215 of the County Code to include a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. Over the budget years of 2014-17, a capital improvement budget was established at approximately \$1 million to initiate the Program. In May 2017, the County began issuing option contracts to purchase and retire transferrable development rights (TDRs) from applicants. Funding has been appropriated in the FY 2018 Capital Budget to continue this program.
3. Adopt zoning and development restrictions that are protective of agricultural land resources.
The County Commissioners adopted a "Tier Map" on April 29, 2014, which was revised with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan on July 12, 2016. The map includes 191,194 acres (65%) of the County as Tier IV, limiting this area to minor subdivisions (7 lots or less). This action, in conjunction with the newly adopted Watershed Conservation District Zone, will substantially reduce rural development and associated impacts to agricultural land resources.
4. Revise the County's transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program.
The County has not made any revisions to the TDR Program since the 2012 LPPRP. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan contains an action item to revise the TDR Program to incentivize their use and to continue designating productive agricultural and forest land as sending areas for TDRs. It also calls for the establishment a work group to examine ways to balance TDR supply and demand and make recommendations for changes to the program. With the improvement in the real estate market in the past few years, the private TDR market has improved, and the County's participation in the purchase and retirement of TDRs will supplement the Program.
5. Examine agricultural land preservation program intent (to include managed forest).
The 2016 Comprehensive Plan includes a specific chapter on Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. This Chapter outlines several goals and objectives related to these three natural resource based industries.

6. Advocate for higher levels of State land preservation funding.
Since the 2012 LPPRP, Charles County has been advocating for, and strongly participating in, land preservation program efforts. Charles County has submitted among the highest numbers of land preservation applications to the MD Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation and contributed some of the highest levels of funding to their Matching Funds Program. By way of example, in the past 3 cycles, combined state and county funding in the amount of \$11.7 million has been spent in Charles County through this Program alone to protect 3,000 acres of agricultural and forest land.
7. Advocate for additional structural economic development support for agriculture.
In the FY 2018 Budget, the County Commissioners created a new position within the County's Economic Development Department. The position title is "Agriculture Business Development Manager" and will be responsible for developing, implementing, and administering programs and initiatives to promote, market, and enhance the County's agricultural industry. Creating this type of position has been a long standing recommendation from previous and current Comprehensive Plans. The position is expected to be hired in July 2017.

II. Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

A. Introduction

The existing system of public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces in Charles County, as illustrated in **Map 2** in the previous section, includes lands and facilities that provide a wide range of opportunities for public participation in recreation, cultural, fitness, and leisure activities. This infrastructure supports the high quality of life and the rural charm actively sought out by residents and visitors of Charles County. As of March 2017, there were 28,139 acres of public and quasi-public properties that provided the public with access to recreation facilities, programs, and activities. Over 24,000 acres, or roughly 87% of all public and private lands in the County that served public recreation functions, were managed by the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.

As of March 2017, 28,139 acres of parks, open spaces, and recreation sites were available to the public in Charles County.

Since the completion of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan in 2012, resources relevant to the provision of parks and recreation services in Charles County government were consolidated into a new Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. This reorganization placed the County's work in providing recreation services, maintenance of parks and recreation facilities, and enhancing visitation and visitor experiences in the County under the purview of the single entity. Prior to 2016, the preparation of this Plan was managed by the Department of Planning and Growth Management; park planning, park maintenance, outdoor recreation facility management, and land acquisition was managed by the Department of Public Works Division of Parks and Grounds; and recreational programming was managed through the Recreation Division of the Department of Community Services.

Significance of Public Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation Opportunities

The system of public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces in Charles County supported a wide variety of benefits and services directly linked to the high quality of life of residents. The natural landscapes and ecological systems preserved on public lands support biodiversity, serve to mitigate flooding and impacts of climate change, and filter drinking water, and rivers flow into the Chesapeake Bay. The trails, sports fields, boat launches, and other public recreation amenities distributed throughout the County provide opportunities for thousands of people to engage with nature; run, play, and stay fit; and enjoy activities known to be beneficial for public health, personal well-being, and local economies.

Children in Nature

The State of Maryland has recognized that young residents have significant roles to play as future stewards of our communities and shared environment. Several major initiatives, including the State's creation of the Partnership for Children in Nature and adoption of statewide education minimum education requirements for environmental literacy, provide youth within Maryland with a basic understanding of the natural world. At the local level, county parks and recreation agencies often work with schools and partner agencies at the federal and state level to provide hands-on opportunities for youth engagement at park sites, nature centers, and shorelines of the Chesapeake Bay.

In Charles County, the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism offers nature and outdoor recreation programs year round, state parks programs engage with locals and visitors, and other private entities, such as 4-H, offer agricultural and land stewardship training and courses for youth. These programs are diverse and intended to educate children about the local environment, learn how to participate in natural resource based activities, such as fishing, and foster the development of future stewards of the environment. Several assets and programs in the community that engage children with nature include the following.

Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center

Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center, a school site within the Charles County Public School System, is located on 10 acres along Nanjemoy Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River. Through this center, Charles County Public Schools has been able to incorporate environmental education into its curriculum at a beautiful site which contains many diverse habitats and plenty of opportunities to experience nature first hand. The center offers students the opportunity to experience the richness of forest, coastal, meadow, and wetland habitats and to explore their own connections to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

Gilbert Run Park Fishing Programs

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism offers fishing programs and opportunities for children at the Gilbert Run Park. The park hosts a Fishing Buddies program each fall and spring for children age 6-15. A free Learn to Fish program is also offered during the summer providing children with a great opportunity to learn the basics of fishing while having fun. The park provides all equipment and instruction. The Learn to Fish program is also made available to children who participate in summer camps that take field trips to the park.

B. Existing System of Public Parks and Recreation Amenities

The County's strong and long standing pro-land conservation philosophy has led to the development of a robust existing system of public parks, forests, and other open space lands that provide abundant opportunities for public participation in a wide variety of recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. In 2017, the majority of the land, facilities, and programs available for public recreational use in Charles County were managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and by the County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. These opportunities were supplemented by other recreation service providers including the National Park Service, cultural and historic

preservation organizations, and private businesses. Private developments in Charles County also play an important role in providing the public with access to the shoreline and water based recreation opportunities. One example is the Swan Point property which is proposed to be developed as a mixed-use, resort community located on Swan Point Boulevard, Issue, Maryland.

As of March 2017, Charles County's system of public parks and open space lands consisted of the following.

- **Total Public and Quasi-Public Lands: 28,139 acres**
 - **Quasi-Public Recreation Lands: 3,796 acres**
 - **County, State, and Federal: 24,343 acres**
 - ♦ *County and Municipal Lands: 4,829 acres*
 - ♦ *State and Federal Lands: 19,514 acres*

In April 2015, the Charles County Commissioners entered into an agreement with Swan Point Development Company, LLC, to provide public access to the water and restored shoreline as outlined in the Agreement. In addition, public access will be provided via a passive park, known as Cuckold Creek Overlook, with associated parking to be located in the planned Harbour Village. The timing of such access is dependent on the issuance of certain Development Services Permits and other associated permits and approvals. **Appendix D** includes an inventory of all public parks, recreation sites, and open spaces in Charles County as of March 2017.

In addition to parks and other traditional recreation amenities, Charles County is rich with cultural and historic resources that provide the public with opportunities for self-directed enjoyment and engagement. These sites, designated historic and arts districts, and stories associated with them are attractions that draw locals and visitors to explore the area, culture, and landscape of the County.

County Arts, Entertainment, and Historic Assets

Culture and history thrive in Charles County. Residents and a growing tourist base are drawn to the County's historic assets, cultural opportunities, arts offerings, and the recreational opportunities they afford. Many of these assets are privately owned and operated, and open to the public for a fee. Several popular arts, cultural, and historic attractions in Charles County are noted below. Additional information about these resources is available online.

Mattawoman Creek Art Center

The Mattawoman Creek Art Center (MCAC) encourages the practice and appreciation of the visual arts in the Southern Maryland community by maintaining and operating a permanent facility to provide exhibition and studio/workshop space for working artists. They provide programming workshops, lectures, demonstrations, films, and seminars with professional artists for participants of all ages, levels of experience, and artistic involvement. The MCAC presents exhibits of regional, national, and international art and provides space for civic and social events in a setting enhanced by art.

Port Tobacco Players

The Port Tobacco Players Theater, located in the heart of downtown La Plata, provides entertainment through consistent quality productions. The group puts on multiple shows throughout the year and provides programming and classes for youth and adults.

Black Box Theater – Indian Head Center for the Arts

The Black Box Theater is a 90 seat theater that provides a unique professional venue for a variety of performing arts programs such as musical and dramatic performances, recitals, exhibits, literary readings, seminars, and theater workshops, to name a few.

Port Tobacco Historic Village

Settled in 1634, Port Tobacco was once Maryland's second largest seaport and was listed on early world maps. The town served as the seat of Charles County from 1727-1895, but its history extends from the prehistoric Native American inhabitants of Potopaco to the current residents of the town. Visitors will learn more about the facts and legends of Historic Port Tobacco Village and can explore on their own or take a guided tour. The tours include the Port Tobacco Courthouse, Stag Hall, and Burch House.

Rich Hill

Visitors can see the exterior of the historic house and read from interpretive panels about the owners and history of Rich Hill. Rich Hill was the birthplace and childhood home of Margaret Brown and her brother Gustavus Brown. Margaret Brown grew up to marry Thomas Stone, one of our founding fathers and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Gustavus Brown went on to be one of President George Washington's physicians and tended to the "Father of our Country" on his deathbed.

In 1865, Abraham Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth, and his accomplice, David Herold, sought food and shelter at Rich Hill after they left the home of Dr. Samuel Mudd. Booth and Herold were given a meal at Rich Hill and were further assisted by the owner, Samuel Cox, who ordered his foster brother, Thomas Jones, to care for the fugitives as they hid in a nearby pine thicket. Rich Hill plays an important role in the escape and manhunt of Lincoln's assassin.

Village of Benedict

First settled as a colonial port town in 1706, the waterfront village of Benedict is located in far-eastern Charles County along a narrow peninsula bordering the Patuxent River and Indian Creek. Benedict has a storied past as the site of the British land invasion during the War of 1812, the site of Camp Stanton, a Union training camp for African Americans during the Civil War, and a rich maritime history spanning three centuries.

Today, the village of Benedict consists of 150 acres and includes residential areas as well as marinas and restaurants, a post office, firehouse, and a Catholic church. Because of its strong historic themes, regional location, and abundant waterfront, in 2012, Charles County completed the Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan, a community-based vision for the future of Benedict that includes improved water access and amenities, infill and redevelopment opportunities, and planned sewer service improvements.

Dr. Mudd House Museum

After breaking his leg during the assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth sought medical attention from Dr. Mudd. Accompanied on horseback by David Herold, Booth arrived at Dr. Mudd's home at 4 a.m., April 15th. Dr. Mudd splinted the broken limb and let the travelers rest for several hours in an upstairs bedroom before they continued their journey later that afternoon. Tours of the property and museum are provided April through November by the Dr. Mudd Society.

Parks, Amenities, and Recreation Opportunities provided by the Federal Government

The federal government manages several sites in Charles County that provide the public with opportunities to recreate, learn about the history and culture of the area, and enjoy and experience nature. The National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management are the primary agencies responsible for the management of the following federal properties in the County:

- Charlie Wright Park
- Douglas Point Property
- Marshall Hall Boat Launch
- Piscataway Park
- Thomas Stone National Historic Site



Charles County actively works in partnership with these federal service providers to maintain and operate Charlie Wright Park, and to operate boat launching facilities at Piscataway Park, and Marshall Hall.

These sites provided unique opportunities for visitors to experience scenic landscapes, participate in outdoor recreation opportunities, and learn about historic resources of national significance. For example, the 390 acre Thomas Stone National Historic Site preserved the rural homestead of Thomas Stone, a significant figure in the Revolutionary War and signatory of the Declaration of Independence. At the site, admission is free, and visitors can participate in ranger-led historic tours of the Thomas Stone House, experience the rural landscape of the site on their own, and learn more about relevant history through exhibits at the Site's visitor's center.

The Site also annually hosts popular Christmas and 4th of July events.

Figure 2: Thomas Stone National Historic Site



*Image Credit: National Park Service
<https://www.nps.gov/thst/index.htm>*

The federal government also managed and promoted several regional historic trails and driving routes that wind through Charles County. These routes stitch together sites related to historical events of national significance that occurred in the area. Each trail has a unique theme, and all were located within the National Park Service's Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network.

- Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail
 - Land and water routes along the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay explored by Captain John Smith are linked together throughout the region. Key sites in Charles County include Mallows Bay Park, Nanjemoy Wildlife Management Area and Smallwood State Park.
- Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
 - The Southern Maryland Potomac Heritage Trail Bicycling Route, part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail network meanders through Charles County and links together routes explored by George Washington.
- Religious Freedom National Scenic Byway
 - Links together sites significant to introduction of the concepts of religious tolerance and separation of church and state in the American Colonies.
- Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail
 - Links together sites in the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River region significant to the War of 1812.



Mallow's Bay – Pending designation as a National Marine Sanctuary

Although not a federal property, as of October 2015, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced its intent to designate the waters of the Potomac River proximate to Mallow's Bay as a national marine sanctuary to help "conserve nationally-significant shipwrecks and maritime heritage resources." The Bay is best known as the home of the "ghost fleet" of over 100 scuttled World War I era transport ships that never saw service. Over 200 total wrecks have been identified in and around Mallow's



Mallow's Bay

Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Bay, and over time, their remains have provided important habitat structure. These unique marine resources, coupled with the high natural resource value of the adjacent preserved lands makes the Mallow's Bay area of high ecological significance. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration public comment period on the proposed sanctuary designation was open from January to March 2017, and final decision on the designation is anticipated by 2019. The County currently provides public access to the land and water resources at Mallow's Bay Park and Maryland Department of Natural Resources manages the surrounding preserved land as Nanjemoy Wildlife Management Area.



State Parks, Open Spaces, and Public Recreation Assets

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is a major provider of outdoor recreation

opportunities in Charles County. As noted in **Table 2**, as of 2016, The Department's land holdings included a total of 19 properties, totaling over 20,000 acres of parks, forests, and open spaces preserved for their significant natural resource values. The majority of the State properties provide public access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking, camping, fishing, boating, hunting, nature appreciation, and basic amenities to support public participation (such as restrooms, boat ramps, and parking areas). Although not developed directly to provide public recreation opportunities, a relatively small portion of Department of Natural Resources lands, such as the Waldorf Natural Resources Police Barracks and fish hatchery properties, function to support direct resource protection, environmental enhancement work, and other large-scale efforts to preserve the larger natural resources on which the Department's outdoor recreation offerings are based.

The majority of public park and open space land area in Charles County is managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Since the last update of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan in 2012, the Department of Natural Resources expanded its total land holding in Charles County by 2,630 acres. Most parcels added to the State inventory since 2012 expanded the total acreage of existing parks, forests, and open space areas.

Table 2: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Properties in Charles County

Property	Acres
Cedar Point Wildlife Management Area	1,914
Cedarville State Forest	2,449
Chapel Point State Park	821
Chapman State Park	829
Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area	382
Doncaster Demonstration Forest	2,117
Hughesville Pond Fisheries Management Area	3
Indian Creek Natural Resource Management Area	659
Manning Hatchery Fisheries Management Area	257
Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area	1,727
Maxwell Hall Natural Resource Management Area	670
Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area	4,817
Nanjemoy Creek Wildlife Management Area	233
Nanjemoy Wildlife Management Area	1,830
Riverside Wildlife Management Area	676
Smallwood State Park	984
Waldorf Natural Resources Police Barracks	3
Welcome Fire Tower	1
Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area	450
Total Acres:	20,822

Source: FY2016 DNR Owned Lands Acreage Report – Maryland Department of Natural Resources

The Department also offered public programs and trainings that educated and engaged existing and new participants in outdoor recreation. Program offerings were diverse and ranged in focus from State-required hunter safety training to naturalist programs and ranger led nature hikes. Additionally, the Department and County maintain several partnerships at park sites, including Chapel Point State Park, Mallows Bay Park, and Maxwell Hall Park where public recreation amenities and service provision are enhanced through the collaborative efforts. The Department and the County school system are also currently working to develop programs for school children to be hosted at Mallows Bay Park.



Chapel Point State Park
Image Credit: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

In addition to these resources, the County and state also collaborate to provide and manage historic and cultural sites and attractions appreciated by locals and visitors, including the Civil War Trail. Charles County includes 14 points of interest pertaining to the Civil War conflict along this state designated driving trail. The Civil War Trail spans across the county and includes many sites along the escape route of John Wilkes Booth after his assassination of President Lincoln.

County and Municipal Parks, Recreation Amenities, and Open Spaces

As of January 2017, Charles County and Towns of Indian Head and La Plata owned and managed 4,829 acres of parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities disbursed throughout the County. The sites are highly valued by residents and visitors for their natural resources, the environmental and social functions they serve, as well as for the unique landscape character of Charles County that they preserve. Several parks, including Oak Ridge Park, provide a combination of developed facilities and natural resource based recreation amenities, which provide for a diversity of recreation opportunities being offered at a single location. School sites throughout Charles County also served as key recreational resources for the public. Outside of regular school use, the athletic fields, sport courts, and associated recreation amenities at these sites were regularly used by youth and adult sport leagues for games and practices. A full inventory of existing public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces is included in **Appendix D**.

The public parks and recreation areas managed by the County, County Board of Education, and Towns of La Plata and Indian Head have been classified into the following general categories:

1. Regional Parks
2. Community Parks
3. Neighborhood Parks and Community Centers
4. School Sites with shared use facilities
5. Sports Complexes
6. Special Use Areas
7. Mini-Parks
8. Natural Resource Areas

- 1. Regional Parks** – are large park areas, typically over 100-acres in size, designed to provide a variety of recreational opportunities, and meant to serve relatively large areas within the County. As of January 2017, there were eight regional parks within the County. Each provided amenities for organized sports, and self-directed recreation opportunities. Facilities may differ at each park, but Charles County’s regional parks collectively offered opportunities for public participation in a wide variety of activities, which included, but were far from limited to, field sports, boating and other water based activities, equestrian riding, golf, tennis, hiking, and biking. Regional Parks in Charles County include:

- Bensville Park
- Friendship Farm Park
- Gilbert Run Park
- Laurel Springs Park
- Maxwell Hall Park
- Oak Ridge Park
- Pisgah Park
- While Plains Regional Park and Golf Course



*Laurel Springs Park Playground
Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation,
Parks, and Tourism*

2. Community Parks – typically range between 15 to 75 acres and are designed to provide recreation opportunities and programs for the population residing within a three to five mile radius of the park. There are 12 community parks in Charles County:

- Benedict Community Park
- Charlie Wright Park
- Indian Head Village Green and Senior Center
- Mattingly Park
- Nanjemoy Community Center
- Pinefield Park
- Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park
- Southern Park
- Tilghman Lake Park
- Town Hall Park
- Turkey Hill Park
- Wills Memorial Park

3. Neighborhood Parks and Community Centers – tend to range between five and 25 acres, and are developed in such a manner to attract users from within relatively short walking distances. Neighborhood parks generally provide recreation amenities such as walking paths, playgrounds, sports courts, and athletic fields. Neighborhood community center sites often provide indoor recreation opportunities as well for private or residential use. In Charles County, there are a total of 15 neighborhood parks and community centers available for use by members or associated Home Owner Association members or private providers. These parks and centers include:

- Agricopia Park
- Redwood Lake
- Silver Linden Park
- St. Charles - Bannister Neighborhood Center
- St. Charles - Dorchester Community Center
- St. Charles - Fieldside Community Center
- St. Charles - Gleneagles Community Center
- St. Charles - Hampshire Community Center
- St. Charles - Huntington Community Ctr.
- St. Charles - Lambeth Hill Lake
- St. Charles - Lancaster Community Center
- St. Charles - Sheffield Community Center
- St. Charles - Wakefield Community Ctr.
- St. Charles - Wakefield Lake
- Woodland Village Neighborhood Park



Community Center Program
Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

4. School Sites With Shared Use Facilities – outside of school hours/use, 37 school sites provide the public with access to and use of athletic fields, sports courts, and other recreation facilities. The recreation areas at school sites are generally similar to neighborhood parks and often serve many of the same general functions when not used for school programming. The majority of these facilities are managed by the County Board of Education and include 78 acres of athletic fields. Maintenance of these school recreation athletic fields is provided by the County Parks and Grounds Division. Nine school sites are used as School-Based Community Centers operated by the Recreation Division. Community centers are focal points within their geographic area that generate a sense of community through interaction and programs. Six school sites provide shared use swimming pools, three indoor pools used year round and three outdoor pools used seasonally. As of January 2017, school sites within the Charles County that allowed for public use outside of school use included:



School Recreation Field
Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

- Arthur Middleton ES
- Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert Community Center
- Berry ES
- C. Paul Barnhart ES
- College of Southern Maryland
- Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES
- Dr. Gustavus Brown ES
- Dr. Samuel Mudd ES
- Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center
- Eva Turner ES
- F.B. Gwynn Center
- Gale Bailey ES
- General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center
- Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool
- Indian Head ES
- J.C. Parks ES
- James Craik ES
- John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School
- La Plata HS & Pool and Matula ES
- Malcolm ES
- Mary Burgess Neal ES
- Mattawoman MS and Mattawoman Community Center
- Matthew Henson MS and Henson Community Center
- Maurice McDonough HS and Pool
- Milton M. Somers MS and Somers Community Center
- Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES
- North Point HS & Community Pool
- Pomonkey Soccer Complex
- Robert D. Stethem Educational Center
- St. Charles HS & Community Pool
- T.C. Martin ES
- Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center
- Thomas Stone HS and Pool
- Walter J. Mitchell ES
- Westlake HS
- William A. Diggs ES
- William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

5. Sports Complexes – Of the three sports complexes available for public use in Charles County, two are operated by the County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. These facilities generally include multiple athletic fields and associated site features that support regular usage by organized sports teams and leagues. Sports Complexes are only open during scheduled athletic events and require a permit for use. Sports complexes in Charles County included:

- Bryantown Sports Complex
- Robert Stethem Park
- Southern Maryland Youth Organization Sports Complex (private management)



Youth Soccer

Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

6. Special Use Areas – are generally sites or facilities operated for a narrow purpose. Roughly half of the special use areas in Charles County are marinas or boat launch sites. These sites are operated by public and private providers. The Capital Clubhouse, a heavily used indoor recreation facility with multiple sports courts and an ice rink, is owned by the County but operated by a private vendor. There are 28 special use areas in Charles County:

- Aqua Land Campgrounds and Marina
- Bel Alton High School
- Capital Clubhouse
- Captain John's Marina
- Charles County Fairgrounds
- Clark Senior Center
- Courthouse Soccer Field
- Desoto/Benedict Marina, Inc.
- Elite Gymnastics & Recreation Center
- Goose Bay Marina and Campsites
- Hatton Creek Boat Ramp
- Hawthorne Country Club
- Indian Head Rail Trail
- La Plata Park (Legion Fields)
- Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility



Indian Head Rail Trail

Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

- Maryland Veterans Museum
- Mason Springs Soft Access Area
- Nanjemoy Creek Preserve
- Pirates Dens Marina
- Pope's Creek Rail Trail
- Port Tobacco Marina and Campground
- Port Tobacco Recreation Center
- Regency Stadium
- Saunders Marina
- Southern MD ATV Park
- Spring Dell Center
- Swann Point Golf Course
- Waldorf Senior Center

7. Mini-Parks – these small recreation areas, typically less than one acre in size, provide recreation facilities such as playgrounds, grassed areas, and other amenities for public use and enjoyment. The 11 mini-parks in Charles County are managed by different groups including private/quasi-public entities, municipalities, and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. In 2017, these areas consisted of:

- Carroll La Plata Village
- Cobb Island Park
- Cobb Island Playground
- Hemlock Court
- Meekins
- Patuxent Court Mini-Park
- Phoenix Run Park I
- Phoenix Run Park II
- St. Charles - St. Paul's Lake
- Star Memorial Garden
- Train Station

Natural Resource Areas – Most of these sites, preserved primarily for their natural resource values, range from hundreds to thousands of acres in size and consist mainly of forests, wetlands, and areas critical to watershed protection. These areas also provide significant opportunities for public participation in natural resource based, outdoor recreation activities including camping, hunting, fishing, and hiking, that help connect people with the natural environment. Natural resource area lands are preserved by the County and State. The majority of natural resource areas are state designated Natural Resource Management Areas, State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, and Natural Environmental Areas managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Natural resource areas include:

- Clark Run Natural Area
- Douglas Point State Natural Resource Management Area
- Douglass Point Special Recreation Area- BLM
- Indian Creek Natural Resource Management Area
- Malloes Bay Park
- Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area
- Ben Doane Area – Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area
- Port Tobacco River Park
- Cedar Point Wildlife Management Area
- Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area
- Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area
- Pomfret Resource Area
- Governor Glendening Natural Environmental Area
- Grove Natural Environmental Area
- Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area
- Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area
- Cedarville State Forest
- Doncaster State Forest

C. Role and Resources of the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Organization

The operations, maintenance, programming, and year-round services provided by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism are major contributors to local quality of life, and visitors' impressions of the County. As one of the major providers of local recreation programs, facilities, and activities, the Department's operations have a positive impact on public health, the environment, economy, and general well-being of the local population.

As illustrated in **Figure 3**, within the local government structure, the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism falls under the direction of the Board of County Commissioners and the Office of the County Administrator.

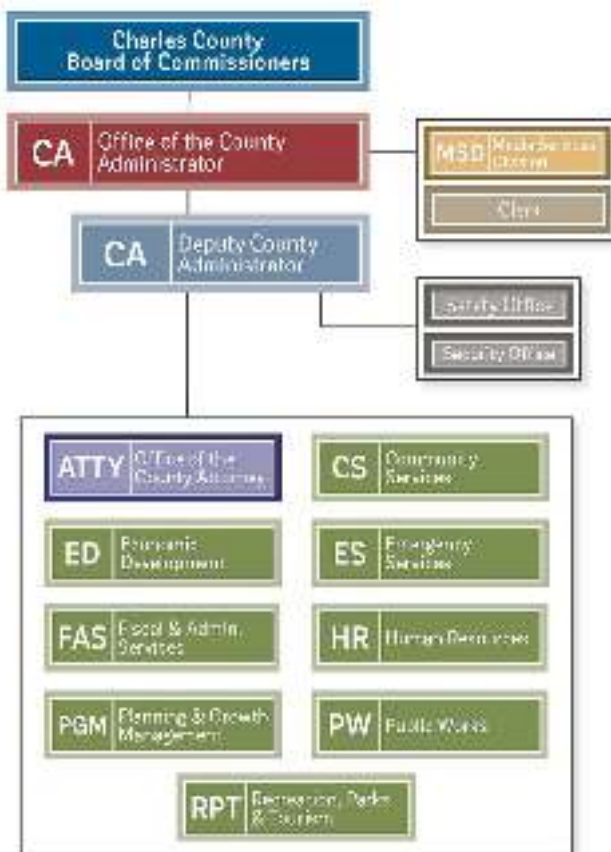
County Mission Statement:

"The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility. We support and encourage efforts to grow a diverse workplace."

County Vision Statement:

"Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation."

Figure 3: Charles County Government Organization Chart FY 2017



The relatively new County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism was formed in 2016 through the consolidation of the following County services:

- Parks planning, grounds maintenance and enhancement operations, and park land acquisition – formerly functions of the Department of Public Works, Division of Parks and Grounds.
 - Recreation Programming, including operation of aquatic centers, community centers, and recreation centers – formerly functions of the Department of Community Services, Recreation Division.
 - Tourism – marketing and associated tourism programs, formerly functions of the County Administrators Office.
 - As of July 2016, the diverse responsibilities of the new Department were organized into four divisions as described below. The FY 2017 Department organizational chart is included in **Appendix F**.
1. **Administration** – manages and provides leadership functions of the Department, including developing budgets, strategic planning, human resources, and special projects. A combination of full and part time staff, inclusive of the Department’s Director and Assistant Director, are dedicated to completing core support services, and honing the overall vision and mission of the new Department. The administration team consisted of 5.5 full time equivalent employees.

2. **Parks and Grounds Division** – is responsible for regular grounds operation and landscape maintenance of 31 County parks and recreation properties, as well as 39 school recreation sites and other county-owned open spaces. In total, the Parks and Grounds Division maintains approximately 4,156 acres of County land. Assets maintained included diverse recreation and support facilities such as sports fields, landscaped areas, a golf course, boat ramps, hiking trails, parking lots, picnic pavilions, and piers. In addition to the management of these facilities, the Parks and Grounds Division manages the Department’s provision of outdoor sports programs. As of FY2017, the Parks and Grounds operations of the Department employs a total of 57.7 full time equivalent employees.
3. **Recreation Division** – the Recreation Division plans, and provides year round sports, recreation, aquatics, arts, therapeutic, and educational programs for all ages. Dozens of programs are provided annually, as detailed in the Department’s quarterly/seasonal catalog “the GUIDE.” Department programs play a significant role in the lives of many households in Charles County. For example, in 2015-2016, the sports programs managed by the Recreation Division alone averaged over 9,000 participants per month. As is a normal practice nationally, fees are charged for participation and admission to most Division programs and events that defer the overall cost to taxpayers in the provision of these public services.

The Recreation Division also operates nine multiple use school-based community centers, Elite Gymnastics and Recreation Center, Port Tobacco Gymnasium, and three indoor and three outdoor pools. These facilities host the many of the activities, workshops, programs, camps, and special events offered by the Division.

In FY2017, the Recreation Division includes 28.2 full time equivalent employees that serve as the Division’s “core” service provision and facility operations team. These positions are funded through the County general fund. An additional 31.6 full time equivalent employees were hired as part-time or seasonal staff to facilitate programming throughout the year. Part time positions are funded through collected fees for program participation and admission.

4. **Tourism Division** – the development of visitation and diverse, high quality visitor experiences in Charles County was identified by the 2016 Comprehensive Plan as an important component of local economic development. The Department’s Tourism team developed and managed programs and special events, and worked to promote the County’s cultural, historic, and recreational amenities as attractive experiences to potential visitors. The programs and events hosted by Tourism target leisure, business, and heritage visitation. The Tourism team includes 8.5 full time equivalent employees in FY2017.

Charles County’s current *Budget Book* details the FY2017 budget adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and provides key information regarding the overall operations of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. Information presented below regarding the Department’s budget and overall operations are further detailed in the *Budget Book*.

Budgets and Funding - Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Operating Funds

Funding for operations of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism for FY2017 totaled \$9,614,134. As noted below in **Table 3** and **Table 4**, the majority of the budget (approximately 82%) is allocated from the County's general fund. Within the Department, roughly 60% of general funding was directed toward parks and grounds operations for maintenance and management of parks, recreation facilities, and amenities. The operating budget of the Department for FY2017 supported 99.9 full time equivalent employees.

Table 3: FY2017 Budget – Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Grants	\$34,734
Recreation	\$1,722,700
General Fund	\$7,856,700
Total Budget:	\$9,614,134

Source: Charles County Budget Book FY2017

Table 4: FY2017 General Fund Allocation – Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

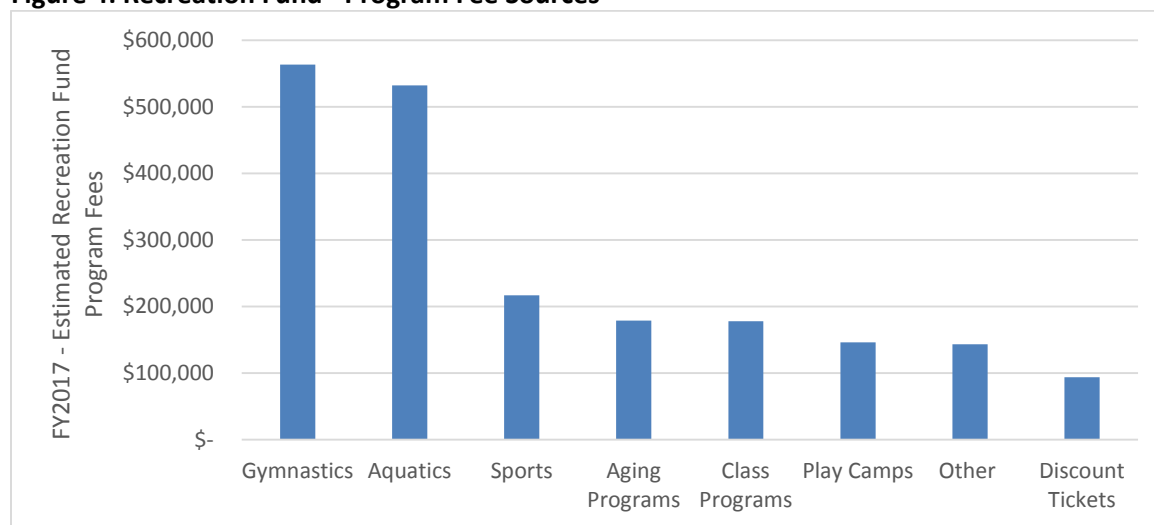
Administration	\$563,300
Recreation	\$1,641,200
Parks and Grounds	\$4,698,000
Tourism	\$954,200
Total General Fund	\$7,856,700

Source: Charles County Budget Book FY2017

Enterprise Funds

The Recreation Division charged modest fees for participation in program offerings and attendance at events. As reported by the *Budget Book*, the Division processed over 9,000 program registrations, and expected to collect over \$2 million in associated user fees in FY2017. These fees for services were accounted for in the County's "Recreation Fund." As illustrated in **Figure 4**, the majority of fees were collected for participation in gymnastics and aquatics programs. Combined, these two programs generated 53% of all fees collected. Fees collected in the Recreation Fund are used by the Department to help cover staffing and operational costs for programs and recreation facilities. Aging Programs are part of the enterprise fund but managed through the Aging and Senior Programs Division with the Department of Community Services.

Figure 4: Recreation Fund - Program Fee Sources



Source: Charles County Budget Book FY2017

Capital Improvement Program

As detailed in the FY2017 *Budget Book*, the capital improvement budget for planned enhancement of the County's system of parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces included projects proposed to enhance existing facilities, develop new amenities, and acquire land for new public parks and open spaces. The current capital improvement funding approved by the Board of County Commissions for FY2017 through FY2021 is illustrated in **Table 5**. Capital improvement program funds generally are from three sources, County general funds, bonds, and/or State funding (including Program Open Space).

**Table 5: Recreation, Parks, and Tourism CIP Approved Funds
FY2017 – FY 2021**

Source: Charles County Budget Book FY 2017

FY 2017: \$1,993,000

- Park Repair and Maintenance Projects
- Waterfront Land Acquisition
- Milton Somers Football Stadium Improvements
- Popes Creek Rail Trail Development

FY 2018: \$870,000

- Park Repair and Maintenance Projects
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Oak Ridge Park Development Phase II

FY 2019: \$404,000

- Park Repair and Maintenance Projects
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

FY 2020: \$439,000

- Park Repair and Maintenance Projects
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Gilbert Run/Oak Ridge Connection Trail Development

FY 2021: \$708,000

- Park Repair and Maintenance Projects
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Gilbert Run/Oak Ridge Connection Trail Development

Five Year Total: \$4,414,000 Yearly Average: \$882,800

FY2017 parks and recreation improvement projects, detailed below, are supportive of the County's 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation plan goals for parks and recreation.

Park Repair and Maintenance Projects – ongoing renovation and repair of existing recreation and park amenities, and purchase of related materials used on a system-wide basis.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities – a total of 11 specific small projects were noted as under consideration in the *FY2017 Budget Book*, but the projects generally focused on creating trail connections, improving safety and access to existing bicycle and pedestrian resources, and the provision of desired amenities, such as periodic “rest stops” on long, linear trails with benches, bicycle racks, etc.

Waterfront Land Acquisition – land capable of preserving waterfront areas, and increasing public access to the Potomac River has been sought for acquisition, and the County plans to pursue a viable property in 2016 – 2018. The acquisition of a waterfront site is anticipated to be the largest single capital expense during the FY2017 to FY2021 period, and is the only land acquisition approved for funding.

Milton Somers Football Stadium Improvements – existing unsafe, unusable bleachers at the Stadium are planned for replacement.

Oak Ridge Development Phase II – continued development of this park site to include the construction of additional sports fields and lights. Program Open Space funds assisted in Phase I of park development.

Pope's Creek Rail Trail – development of a 2.7 mile long hiker trail.

Waldorf Park – proposed project for FY18. Park will include athletic fields, basketball court, playground, hiking trails, and a dog park.

Multi-Generational Facility (Waldorf Area) – Proposed project for FY18.

The Significance of Program Open Space

Charles County depends on Program Open Space funds to assist in implementing the goals of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. Established in 1969, and administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Program Open Space receives funding through a small statewide real estate transfer tax and spreads that funding into multiple subprograms for open space preservation and the enhancement of outdoor recreation opportunities for the public benefit.

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Program Open Space is good for business and the overall quality of life in Maryland. As of 2015 Program Open Space:

- *Protected 380,000 acres of land statewide.*
- *Awarded more than 5,800 grants to local governments through Program Open Space Local.*
- *Enhanced quality of communities.*
- *Established Greenways and Green Infrastructure networks.*
- *Provided state and local park or public open space areas within 15 minutes of most residents.*

Program Open Space – Local program has been used by Charles County since the Program’s inception to match County funds to improve the local parks and recreation system through the acquisition of land for parks and open spaces, and enhancement of public recreation opportunities within the County. Charles County’s use of these funds is guided by this Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan through the submission of an annual program filed Maryland Department of Natural Resources each July. The existing approved annual program for FY2017 included:

\$1,478,975
Program Open Space Local side funding has been leveraged to acquire land for parks and to enhance recreation opportunities in Charles County since 2012.

- **Land Acquisition:**
 - Popes Creek Acquisition Phase II – two parcels totaling 668 acres, including over 100 acres of coastal areas and wetlands proposed for acquisition. The parcels are adjacent to existing parkland and Popes Creek Rail Trail.
- **Facility Development/Rehabilitation:**
 - Popes Creek Rail Trail Phase II – continued development of the 2.7 mile Popes Creek Rail Trail.
 - Pinefield Community Park Improvements – proposed enhancements to this existing 20 acre park site in Waldorf included:
 - ♦ Rehabilitation of basketball courts, baseball fields, and soccer fields, turf renovation throughout the park, and construction of a new group picnic pavilion.

The strategic enhancements of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that utilized Program Open Space funds were planned to help the County work toward achieving the goals of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, as well as those of the County Comprehensive Plan, and State of Maryland.

D. Level of Service Analysis

As with the 2012 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, this 2017 Plan provides updated baseline information regarding the provision of existing public parks and recreation opportunities in Charles County including:

- Inventory of existing public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces – **Appendix D.**
- Measure of acres/population.
- Current perceptions regarding County parks and public recreation opportunities.

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the overall economic benefits derived from investing in public open spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities in Maryland include:

- *Home values tend to increase faster around parks and protected open space than comparable homes in other settings.*
- *New businesses prefer to locate in communities with parks and quality environments.*
- *Tourism is one of Maryland’s top industries. Historical structures, landscapes, parks, and forests supported by Program Open Space are essential to the continued growth of this sector of Maryland’s economy.*
- *The Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress reported that a city’s quality of life is “more important than purely business-related factors” when it comes to attracting new businesses.*
- *Businesses which move to an area because of tax incentives tend to leave as soon as the incentives expire. Businesses drawn to an area because of its quality of life remain long-term residents and taxpayers.*

- Data regarding usage, demand, and participation in County parks and recreation services.
- Existing and projected County population statistics and trends.
- Review of relevant County programs and funding sources for parks and recreation.
- Feedback and perceptions of staff, stakeholders, and public.

To determine how well public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces serve the community, the State of Maryland previously required counties to review the capacity of the parks system to meet existing and projected future needs. This had been accomplished primarily through measuring the number of acres of recreation land per 1,000 population and determining if the County's standing in relation to Maryland's (recently retired) default recreational acreage goal for each county to provide at least 30 acres of recreation land per 1,000 residents.

The 2017 "Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines" used in the preparation of this Plan diverged from the previous requirements that guided county measurement of the level of service provided by public parks systems. Instead of directing the calculation of acres of recreation land per population, the 2017 Guidelines, "allow the local jurisdictions the flexibility to use a methodology that is useful for them; provided that it makes the case for how the jurisdiction will address the recreational needs of their users" in gauging the level of service provided by existing public parks, recreation amenities, and open space to the community.

Level of Service Analysis Focus Areas

The level of service analysis completed for this update of the Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan evaluated how well the system of public parks, recreation amenities and programs, and open spaces in the County appeared to meet the recreational needs of the community, as of January 2017. As encouraged by the 2017 "Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Guidelines," this analysis reviewed multiple focus areas relevant to the County's provision of lands, facilities, and programs that provide the public with diverse opportunities to recreate and engage with nature.

Level of Service Analysis Focus Areas for 2017

- 1) Measured Participation in County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Programs
- 2) Estimated Household Participation in Recreation, Fitness, and Leisure Activities
- 3) Economic Impacts of County Household Participation in Recreation, Fitness, and Leisure Activities
- 4) Distribution of County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Assets (Drive-Time Proximity)
- 5) Overall Findings of Level of Service Analysis

Measured Participation in County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Programs

Given the long tradition of land conservation and strong community ties to the rivers, forests, and farmland in Charles County, it is not surprising that residents and visitors share a deep appreciation of the recreation opportunities afforded by the public parks and open spaces found here. Although no practical means currently exist to track all use of public parks and open spaces in the County, existing data from metrics tracked by the County for FY2016 indicated that there was strong participation in activities and high demand for use of recreation facilities, programs, and services.

The 2016 “Annual Report to the Citizens of Charles County” highlights the high interest and public participation in County-provided recreation programs, events, and activities for all ages of residents and visitors. Programs and events hosted by various County agencies were well attended in 2016:

- Nearly 8,000 registrations for Recreation Division programs including aquatics, gymnastics, sports, fitness classes, and summer camp programs.
- County senior center programs drew in 3,480 participants, including the Indian Head Senior Center, which was recognized for excellence in its programs promoting nutrition, fitness, and health.
- The Celebrate Charles series of annual special events hosted by the County saw high attendance. The Fun Filled Fourth event was attended by over 10,000 participants and FallFest attendance was estimated at over 5,000.
- The County’s Crain Memorial Welcome Center received nearly 90,000 visitors.

In addition to the County’s annual report, data tracked by the County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism for the period of October 2015 to August 2016 (11 months) reported:

- 9,277 average monthly participants in Recreation Division sports programs.
- 102,047 total participants in Recreation Division sports programs.
- 16,210 recreation activity registrations with an average of 1,474 registrations per month.
- Nearly 21,000 visitors to historic sites.

Estimated Household Participation in Recreation, Fitness, and Leisure Activities

As detailed in **Appendix B**, the estimated rate of County household participation in a variety of recreation, fitness, and leisure activities was generally high. In the three general activity categories studied, participation was highest in self-directed activities. The most popular activities by estimated level of household participation are highlighted below.



Current Perceptions – Engagement Sessions Findings and Survey Results

Staff and Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

On November 15 and 16, 2016, eight focus group sessions were held by the project team to gather feedback and insight from public, staff, and local stakeholders with interests in the County's provision of parks and recreation services. Participants in focus groups represented federal, State, County, and local government recreation service providers, and over a dozen local user groups. Discussions focused on specific challenges, levels of satisfaction, and identification of potential new opportunities associated with their management and/or use of Charles County's system of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces.

2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan Focus Groups

1. Core Project Team.
2. County Parks and Grounds Division staff and Recreation Division staff focus group.
3. County Leadership focus group – County leadership staff from Departments of Public Works; Finance; Planning and Growth Management; and Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.
4. Agricultural Land Preservation and Natural Resource Land Conservation focus group – County Department of Planning and Growth Management staff and representatives from the County Farm Bureau and local land conservation groups.
5. Tourism and Aging focus group – County Tourism Division staff and County Division of Aging and Senior Services Staff.
6. Outdoor Recreation (non-league sports) focus group – representatives from the Piscataway tribe, kayak group, and local disc golf association.
7. Indoor Recreation focus group – representatives from the County Recreation Division and local hockey league.
8. Outdoor (league) Sports focus group – representatives from local youth and adult sports leagues including baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and football.

Feedback received from these meetings generally fell into four topic areas, including indoor recreation opportunities, outdoor recreation opportunities, historic and cultural resources, and overall level of satisfaction with existing public parks and recreation assets in Charles County. Largely, most participants noted a relatively high level of satisfaction with the existing public parks system and variety of recreation opportunities available in Charles County. Responses from both users and providers of public parks and recreation services also suggested areas of recreation service provision that could be improved. As summarized by general topic area, feedback received included:

- **Indoor Recreation Opportunities** in Charles County:
 - The long-standing shared use of recreation facilities at County schools was seen as generally positive. County agencies were noted as working to update their collaborative processes to meet growing demands for facility use for school purposes and public recreation programming.
 - The Capital Clubhouse was viewed as an important community asset to stakeholders.
 - Ice rink time/space, as well as sports court time/space were perceived to be in short supply and high demand.
 - Gymnastics and aquatics programs are highly popular with youth participants.

- **Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Charles County:**

- Expanding waterfront and water access areas for public use is seen as desirable. Staff and stakeholders recognized the challenges associated with waterfront land acquisition and future site development.
 - ♦ The addition of more canoe/kayak rental opportunities at existing water access sites was suggested by user group representatives and providers.
- The continued development of trails and bike paths was universally seen as positive. Trail based recreational activities including hiking, walking, jogging, running, and cycling appeared to be popular activities among focus group participants.
- State parks and natural areas managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources were seen as significant recreation assets in the County.
- There was interest in designating the waters of the Potomac River near Mallows Bay Park as a National Marine Sanctuary. Users and providers would like to see additional improvements made at the Park to allow for greater public access and user comfort.
- Sports fields and multiple-use athletic fields were noted as heavily used, not maintainable to the level desired, and in some areas lacked support infrastructure to enhance existing use (such as lights to extend field use time). Suggestions were made to consider the construction of artificial turf sports fields.
- Disc golf appeared to be growing in regional popularity, existing County course is good, and local user groups would like to develop more amenities.



*Turkey Hill Park Disc Golf Course
Image Credit: Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks,
and Tourism*

- **Historic and Cultural Resources:**

- National Park Service sites, historic trails, and other local cultural and historic resources and events could be better leveraged to increase visitors to the County. Thomas Stone National Historic Site reported an increase in visitation due to increased involvement in the community.
- The enhancement of the visitor experience associated with the sites and story of John Wilkes Booth's time in the County was noted as a potential area for improvement.
- Agro-tourism and farm to table food concepts were noted as potential means of highlighting the County's strong ties to its farming and fishing industries.

- **Overall level of satisfaction** with public parks and recreation assets in Charles County:
 - County staff and stakeholders both noted high levels of satisfaction with the maintenance and overall condition of the County’s parks and open spaces.
 - Capital and operating funding of County parks and recreation services would benefit from an increase. Existing use of some sports facilities (especially courts, sports fields, and ice rinks) has them programmed/permitted to capacity; with demand occasionally outweighing the capacity of these facilities system-wide.
 - Program Open Space funds were considered highly significant to improving the parks and recreation system throughout the County.
 - Seniors perceived a general lack of park space in Waldorf, and overall need in the County for more community pools, parks, paved walking trails, and cultural/arts spaces.
 - Concerns for the future were raised – staff and stakeholders do not want public parks and recreation areas in Charles County to be “loved to death” by the existing heavy use of facilities, and projected increase in future demand as the local population grows.

Online/Open Link Survey Findings

In addition to speaking directly with staff and stakeholders, the general public was invited to participate in the planning process and share their feedback with the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism through an internet-based, open link survey. The survey consisted of 16 questions, and was managed utilizing Survey Monkey, a widely used online survey engagement tool, which was

hosted through the Charles County website. Outreach and notification was accomplished primarily through a press release, email blasts, and social media postings to the thousands of park users and program participants signed up for Department’s notifications. The survey was open for anyone to participate from November 1 – 30, 2016 and received over 1,000 responses. Although not designed as a scientifically-valid survey, the online survey collected valuable ideas and perceptions of a significant number of respondents. A report summarizing survey findings is included in **Appendix E**.

Nearly 70% of online survey respondents reported most commonly using parks and recreation facilities that were close to home – generally no more than 10 miles away.

Key findings from the survey included:

- Many survey respondents visited a variety of County parks and recreation sites at least once, if not a few times over the last year. However, over 10% of respondents indicated visiting 27 individual County sites more than 20 times. Most sites receiving such reported high-rates of return visitation typically included facilities for organized sports leagues and recreation programs.
- Nearly 70% of respondents report most commonly using parks and recreation facilities that are close to home – generally no more than 10 miles away.
- The vast majority of respondents were highly satisfied with the physical condition of facilities and quality of recreation programs and services of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.
- Respondents indicated that funding of improvements of County parks facilities and enhancement of recreation services should be done through both a tax increase and increased user fees, and not one means versus the other.
- The enhancement of the County’s trail system, waterfront recreation sites and boat launches, and sports fields were identified as high priorities for targeting improvements.

Trends Influencing the Provision of Parks and Recreation Services in Charles County

Appendix B includes a detailed study of national trends likely to influence the County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism's provision of parks and recreation services. This study reviewed contemporary issues such as changing demographics, significance of natural resource stewardship in recreation provision; the role and responsibilities of local parks agencies; and national participation rates in different sports, fitness, recreation, and leisure activities similar to those offered by the County. Of these trends and other influencing factors, the following appeared most relevant to the County's provision of public parks, open spaces, and recreation opportunities:

- Participation in paddle sports and other water-based activities has been on the rise. Given Charles County's location in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, abundant, natural coastal resources, and existing high demand for public waterfront recreation areas and boat access facilities, the County should continue to focus on coastal recreation planning and implementation of natural resource stewardship programs.
 - National participation in nearly all water sports activities tracked by the Outdoor Industry Association increased over the past three years. Double digit increases in participation were measured in multiple kayak-based activities, and a nearly 26% increase in participation was measured in stand up paddle boarding.
- The County's population is growing. Local households are generally young and have a significantly higher average annual median household income when compared to peers in Maryland and nationally. Over ¼ of the 2015 population in the County were Millennials, who nationally tend to participate in a variety of organized sports and self-directed recreation activities, and have high expectations for the quality of their recreation experiences. Generally, there are, and will likely continue to be, more County residents who seek out recreation experiences close to home and have the means to fund their household's participation.
- Many trending national sports and recreation program types are already offered by the County's Recreation Division, including exercise and wellness programs, environmental education activities, senior and therapeutic recreation program, and youth and adult sports leagues.
- The national popularity and practicality of trails and bike paths for providing opportunities for the public to walk, run, and cycle outdoors is reflected well in Charles County. These activities are great for personal and public health. Public trails and paths, such as the Indian Head Rail Trail, are key infrastructure that support these activities.
- Outdoor recreation planning and natural resource land conservation efforts can, and should, work hand in hand. These services are complementary and both equally tied to the high quality of life of residents and meaningful recreation experiences of visitors. Charles County uses the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan as a tool to connect recreation and natural resource land planning. Nature programming and directed public engagement with nature through parks and public open spaces can serve as building blocks of positive individual environmental ethos, and foster the next generation of future stewards of Charles County's dynamic landscape, and system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.

Economic Impacts of Participation in Recreation, Fitness, and Leisure Activities in Charles County

The nationwide economic impacts of public participation in recreation, fitness, and leisure activities are enormous. As measured by the Outdoor Industry Association, a trade association representing over 1,200 outdoor recreation industry entities, in “The Outdoor Recreation Economy,” Americans spent \$646 billion on outdoor recreation in 2012. Roughly 80% of that spending was estimated to have been on transportation, food, lodging, admissions, and other fees typically associated with participation in an activity. The remaining 20%, or nearly \$121 billion, was estimated to have been spent on products related to participation, such as apparel, equipment, vehicles, and related services.

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the economic benefits of public open space include:

- Home values tend to increase faster around parks and protected open space than comparable homes in other settings.
- New businesses prefer to locate in communities with parks and quality environments.
- Tourism is one of Maryland’s top industries. Historical structures, landscapes, parks, and forests supported by Program Open Space are essential to the continued growth of this sector of Maryland’s economy.
- The Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress reported that a city’s quality of life is “more important than purely business-related factors” when it comes to attracting new businesses.
- Businesses which move to an area because of tax incentives tend to leave as soon as the incentives expire. Businesses drawn to an area because of its quality of life remain long term residents and taxpayers.
- Program Open Space is good for business and for the overall quality of life in Maryland and its attractive residential communities.

In Maryland the 2010 “Maryland State Parks Economic Impact and Visitor Study” concluded that visitation to State parks alone generated over \$650 million in annual associated spending, with the majority of that economic impact concentrated within 20 minutes of state park sites. Additionally, the Maryland Department of Tourism noted that in 2014, sports festivals and tournaments generated \$1.3 million in local spending in Charles County. Locally, data driven analysis for Charles County indicated that in 2016, County households were likely to have spent nearly \$1,300 each on average, and over \$72 million collectively, to participate in recreational activities. This estimate of local household spending on recreation is detailed in **Appendix B**.



*Bassmaster Elite Fishing Tournament – August 2016
Image Credit: Smallwood State Park, Maryland DNR
<https://twitter.com/SmallwoodSP>*

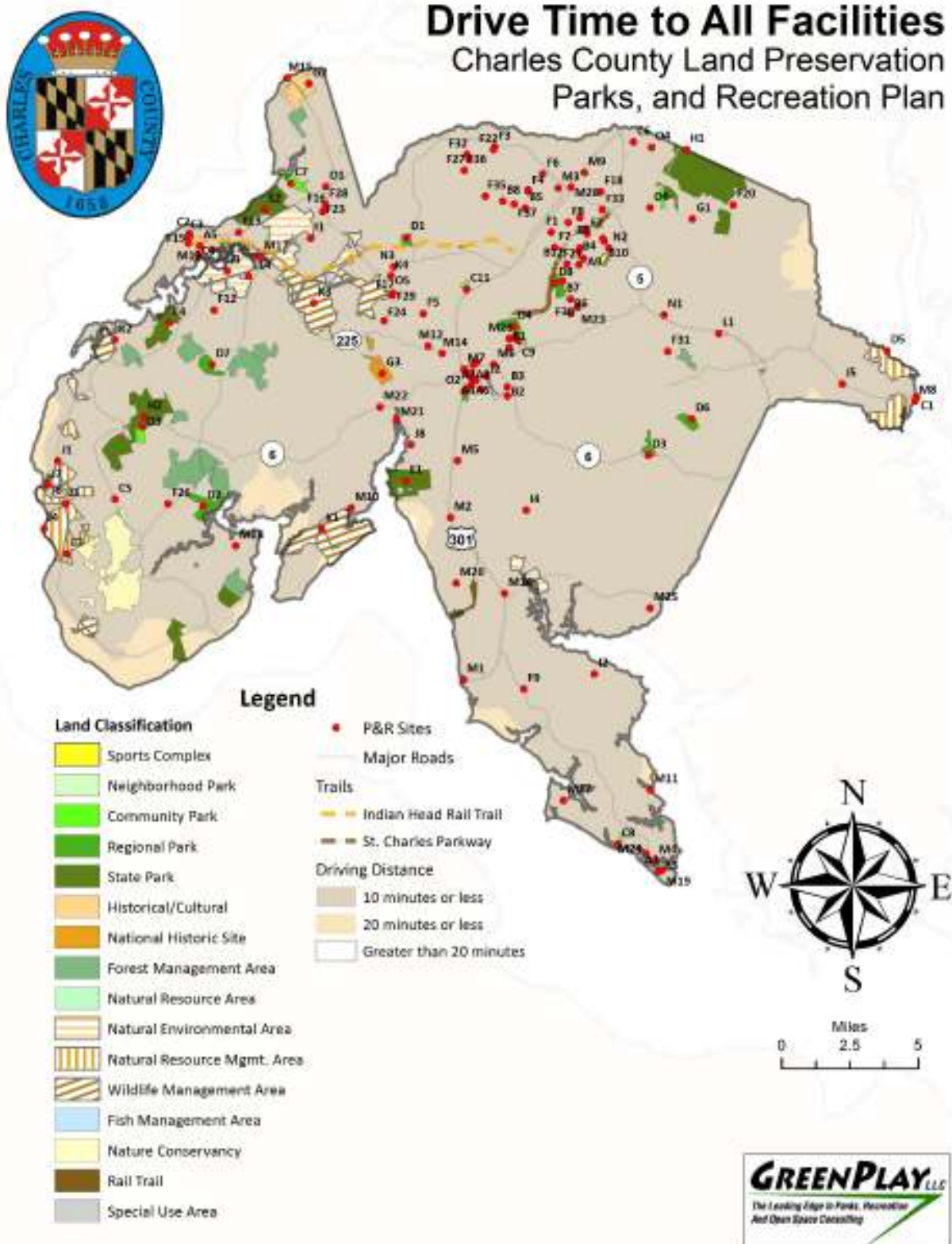
Distribution of Public Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Assets (Drive-Time Proximity)

Public parks and recreation assets are located throughout Charles County. The distribution of these community amenities should ideally provide residents living in all parts of the County with access to recreation opportunities close to where they live. County staff and stakeholders who participated in the planning process identified reliance on the automobile to travel from home to parks and other public recreation amenities. Although participants expected to drive, they did not want to travel for more than 10 to 20 minutes to access a recreation amenity. This level of willingness to travel to access parks and recreation opportunities was used as the basis for measuring the distribution of these assets countywide.

The following series of maps illustrates the distribution of public parks, recreation sites, and open spaces in Charles County. **Maps 5-9** illustrate the distribution of sites with specific, popular recreation amenities and areas of the County within 10 and 20 minute drive times of those sites. Areas shown to be within a 10-minute drive of sites are considered to have good access to at least one site with that type of recreation amenity. Areas between a 10 and 20-minute drive from a park or recreation site with the specified amenity were considered to have moderate access to these amenities. Larger, foldout versions of these maps and public recreation asset list are available in **Appendix D**.

Based on the drive time analysis, countywide, residents have good access to a variety of parks, recreation, and open space amenities. Although these areas are distributed throughout the County, a higher number and density of parks and recreation sites are located in and around densely populated areas, including Waldorf to meet local needs. Within these areas the population is likely to have less reliance on the automobile and may prefer for parks and recreation amenities to be within walking, rather than driving distance from home.

Map 4: Driving Distance to all Parks and Recreation Sites



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay LLC

From most points within the County, there is at least one park, open space, or recreational facility within a 10-minute drive. It is a slightly longer drive from the southwest corner of the County to such facilities. However, all areas within Charles County appeared to be no further than a 20-minute drive from a recreational facility or park. Parks and recreation sites included in the analysis include:

Parks

Mini Park

- A1 - Carroll La Plata Village
- A2 - Cobb Island Park
- A3 - Cobb Island Playground
- A4 - Hemlock Court
- A5 - Meekins
- A6 - Patuxent Court Mini-Park
- A7 - Phoenix Run Park I
- A8 - Phoenix Run Park II
- A9 - St. Charles - St. Paul's Lake
- A10 - Star Memorial Garden
- A11 - Train Station

Neighborhood

- B1 - Agricopia Park
- B2 - Redwood Lake
- B3 - Silver Linden Park
- B4 - St. Charles - Bannister Neighborhood Center
- B5 - St. Charles - Dorchester Community Center
- B6 - St. Charles - Fieldside Community Center
- B7 - St. Charles - Gleneagles Community Center
- B8 - St. Charles - Hampshire Community Center
- B9 - St. Charles - Huntington Community Ctr.
- B10 - St. Charles - Lambeth Hill Lake
- B11 - St. Charles - Lancaster Community Center
- B12 - St. Charles - Sheffield Community Center
- B13 - St. Charles - Wakefield Community Ctr.
- B14 - St. Charles - Wakefield Lake
- B15 - Woodland Village Neighborhood Park

Community

- C1 - Benedict Community Park
- C2 - Charlie Wright Park
- C3 - Indian Head Village Green and Senior Center
- C4 - Mattingly Park
- C5 - Nanjemoy Community Center
- C6 - Pinefield Park
- C7 - Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park
- C8 - Southern Park
- C9 - Tilghman Lake Park
- C10 - Town Hall Park
- C11 - Turkey Hill Park
- C12 - Wills Memorial Park

Public School Recreation Areas

- F1 - Arthur Middleton ES
- F2 - Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert Community Center
- F3 - Berry ES
- F4 - C. Paul Barnhart ES
- F5 - College of Southern Maryland
- F6 - Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES
- F7 - Dr. Gustavus Brown ES
- F8 - Dr. Samuel Mudd ES
- F9 - Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center
- F10 - Eva Turner ES
- F11 - F.B. Gwynn Center
- F12 - Gale Bailey ES
- F13 - General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center
- F14 - Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool
- F15 - Indian Head ES
- F16 - J.C. Parks ES
- F17 - James Craik ES
- F18 - John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School
- F19 - La Plata HS & Pool and Matula ES
- F20 - Malcolm ES
- F21 - Mary Burgess Neal ES
- F22 - Mattawoman MS and Mattawoman Community Center
- F23 - Matthew Henson MS and Henson Community Center
- F24 - Maurice McDonough HS and Pool
- F25 - Milton M. Somers MS and Somers Community Center
- F26 - Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES
- F27 - North Point HS & Community Pool
- F28 - Pomonkey Soccer Complex
- F29 - Robert D. Stethem Educational Center
- F30 - St. Charles HS & Community Pool
- F31 - T.C. Martin ES
- F32 - Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center
- F33 - Thomas Stone HS and Pool
- F34 - Walter J. Mitchell ES
- F35 - Westlake HS
- F36 - William A. Diggs ES
- F37 - William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

Historic/Cultural

- G1 - Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House
- G2 - Piscataway Park
- G3 - Thomas Stone National Landmark

- J2 - Clark Run Natural Area
- J3 - Douglas Point State NRMA
- J4 - Douglass Point Special Recreation Area- BLM
- J5 - Indian Creek NRMA
- J6 - Malloys Bay Park
- J7 - Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area
- J8 - Port Tobacco River Park

Wildlife Mgmt. Area

- K1 - Cedar Point WMA
- K2 - Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area
- K3 - Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area
- K4 - Pomfret Resource Area

State Fish Mgmt. Area

- L1 - Hughesville Pond Fish Management Area

Special Use Area

- M1 - Aqua Land Campgrounds and Marina
- M2 - Bel Alton High School
- M3 - Capital Clubhouse
- M4 - Captain John's Marina
- M5 - Charles County Fairgrounds
- M6 - Clark Senior Center
- M7 - Courthouse Soccer Field
- M8 - Desoto/Benedict Marina, Inc.
- M9 - Elite Gymnastics & Recreation Center
- M10 - Goose Bay Marina and Campsites
- M11 - Hatton Creek Boat Ramp
- M12 - Hawthorne Country Club
- M13 - Indian Head Rail Trail
- M14 - La Plata Park (Legion Fields)
- M15 - Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility
- M16 - Maryland Veterans Museum
- M17 - Mason Springs Soft Access Area
- M18 - Nanjemoy Creek Preserve
- M19 - Pirates Dens Marina
- M20 - Pope's Creek Rail Trail
- M21 - Port Tobacco Marina and Campground
- M22 - Port Tobacco Recreation Center
- M23 - Regency Stadium
- M24 - Saunders Marina
- M25 - Southern MD ATV Park
- M26 - Spring Dell Center
- M27 - Swann Point Golf Course
- M28 - Waldorf Senior Center

Sports Complex

- N1 - Bryantown Soccer Complex
- N2 - Robert Stethem Park
- N3 - Southern Md Youth Org Inc. Fields

Regional

D1 - Bensville Park
D2 - Friendship Farm Park
D3 - Gilbert Run Park
D4 - Laurel Springs Park
D5 - Maxwell Hall Park
D6 - Oak Ridge Park
D7 - Pisgah Park
D8 - White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E1 - Chapel Point State Park
E2 - Chapman State Park
E3 - Purse State Park
E4 - Smallwood State Park

State Forest

H1 - Cedarville State Forest
H2 - Doncaster State Forest

Natural Environmental Area

I1 - Governor Glendening Natural Environmental Area
I2 - Grove Natural Environmental Area
I3 - Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area
I4 - Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area

Natural Resource Area

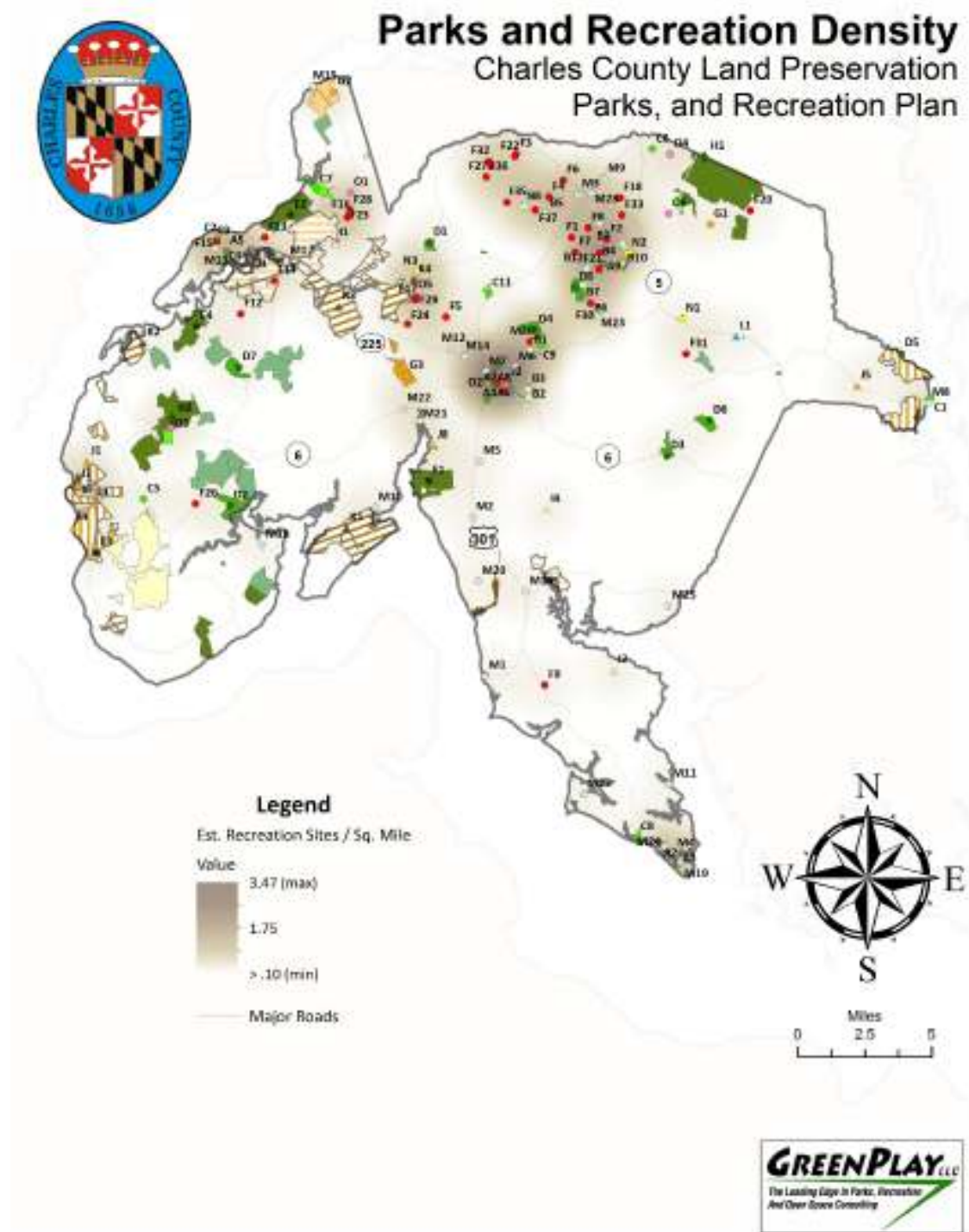
J1 - Ben Doane Area - Nanjemoy WMA

Undeveloped Park

O1 - Bryans Road Park
O2 - La Plata Farm Park
O3 - Nanjemoy Community Park
O4 - Pinefield Future School Site
O5 - Pomfret Park
O6 - Waldorf Park

Map 5 illustrates the density of recreation sites located throughout Charles County. Site illustrated on this map are the same as those included in **Map 4**, for all parks and recreation sites.

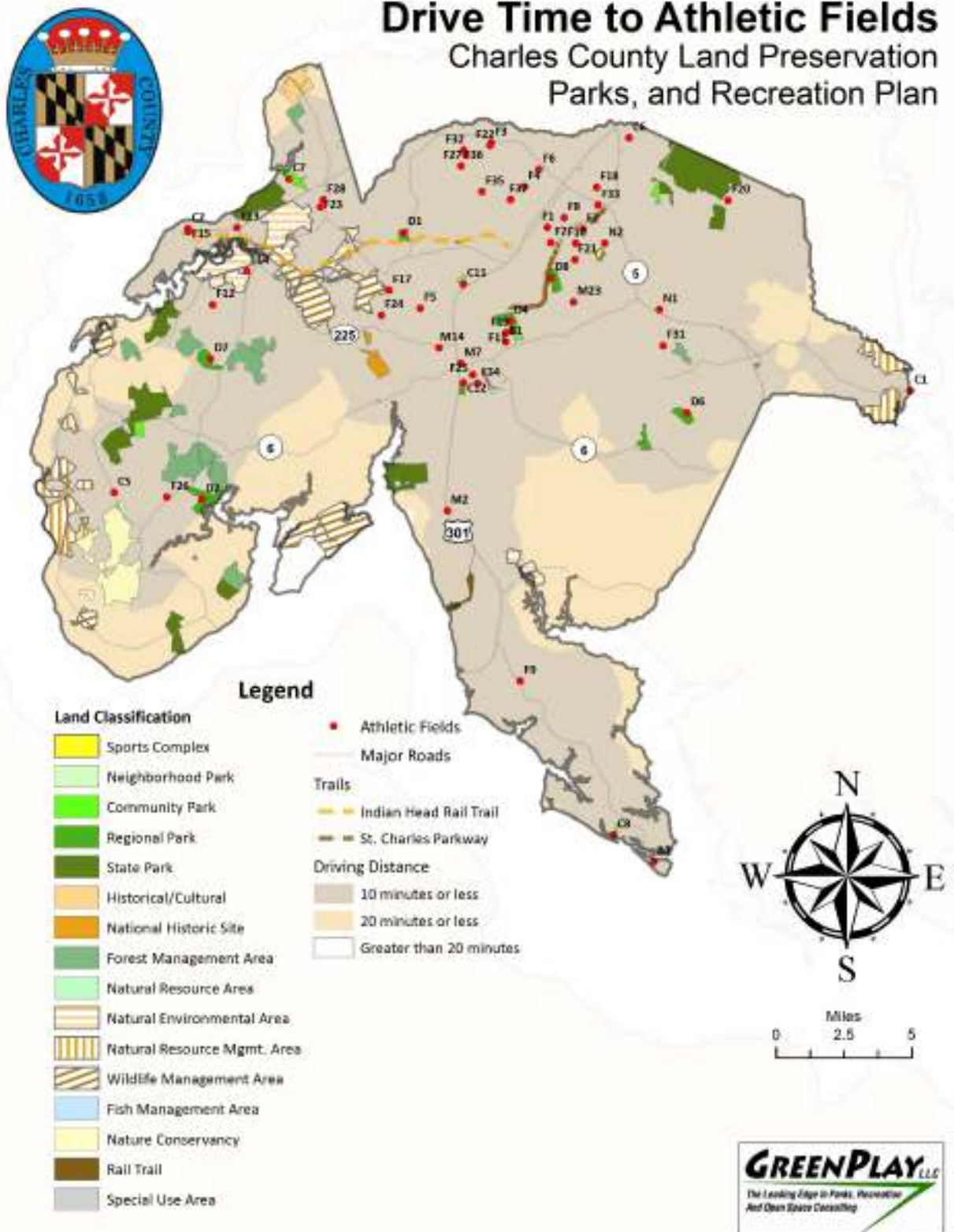
Map 5: Park, Recreation, and Open Space Location Density



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

The majority of parks and recreation facilities are located in the northern half of the County within or proximate to designated growth areas, including Waldorf and La Plata. In the Waldorf area, most of these amenities are located at school recreation sites.

Map 6: Driving Distance to Athletic Fields



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

Athletic fields available for public use, and through County programs, were located at several dozen parks, schools, and other recreation sites. Approximately 75 percent of these amenities were located within a 10-minute drive of most areas within the County. Most athletic fields were located at sites proximate to Waldorf and La Plata. Sites with athletic fields included:

Parks

Mini Park

A2 – Cobb Island Park

Neighborhood

B1 – Agricopia Park

Community

C1 – Benedict Community Park

C2 – Charlie Wright Park

C5 – Nanjemoy Community Center

C6 – Pinefield Park

C7 – Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park

C8 – Southern Park

C11 – Turkey Hill Park

C12 – Wills Memorial Park

Regional

D1 – Bensville Park

D2 – Friendship Farm Park

D4 – Laurel Springs Park

D6 – Oak Ridge Park

D7 – Pisgah Park

D8 – White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E1 – Chapel Point State Park

E2 – Chapman State Park

E3 – Purse State Park

E4 – Smallwood State Park

Public School Recreation Areas

F1 – Arthur Middleton ES

F2 – Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert

Community Center

F3 – Berry ES

F4 – C. Paul Barnhart ES

F5 – College of Southern Maryland

F6 – Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES

F7 – Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School

F8 – Dr. Samuel Mudd ES

F9 – Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center

F10 – Eva Turner ES

F11 – F.B. Gwynn Center

F12 – Gale Bailey ES

F13 – General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center

F14 – Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool

F15 – Indian Head ES

F17 – James Craik Elementary School

F18 – John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School

F19 – La Plata HS & Pool and Matula Elem. School

F20 – Malcolm ES

F21 – Mary Burgess Neal ES

F22 – Mattawoman Middle School and Mattawoman Community Center

F23 – Matthew Henson Middle School and Henson Community Center

F24 – Maurice McDonough HS and Pool

F25 – Milton M. Somers Middle School and Somers Community Center

F26 – Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES

F27 – North Point High School & Community Pool

F28 – Pomonkey Soccer Complex

F31 – T.C. Martin ES

F32 – Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center

F33 – Thomas Stone HS and Pool

F34 – Walter J. Mitchell ES

F35 – Westlake HS

F36 – William A. Diggs ES

F37 – William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

Special Use Area

M2 – Bel Alton High School

M7 – Courthouse Soccer Field

M14 – La Plata Park (Legion Fields)

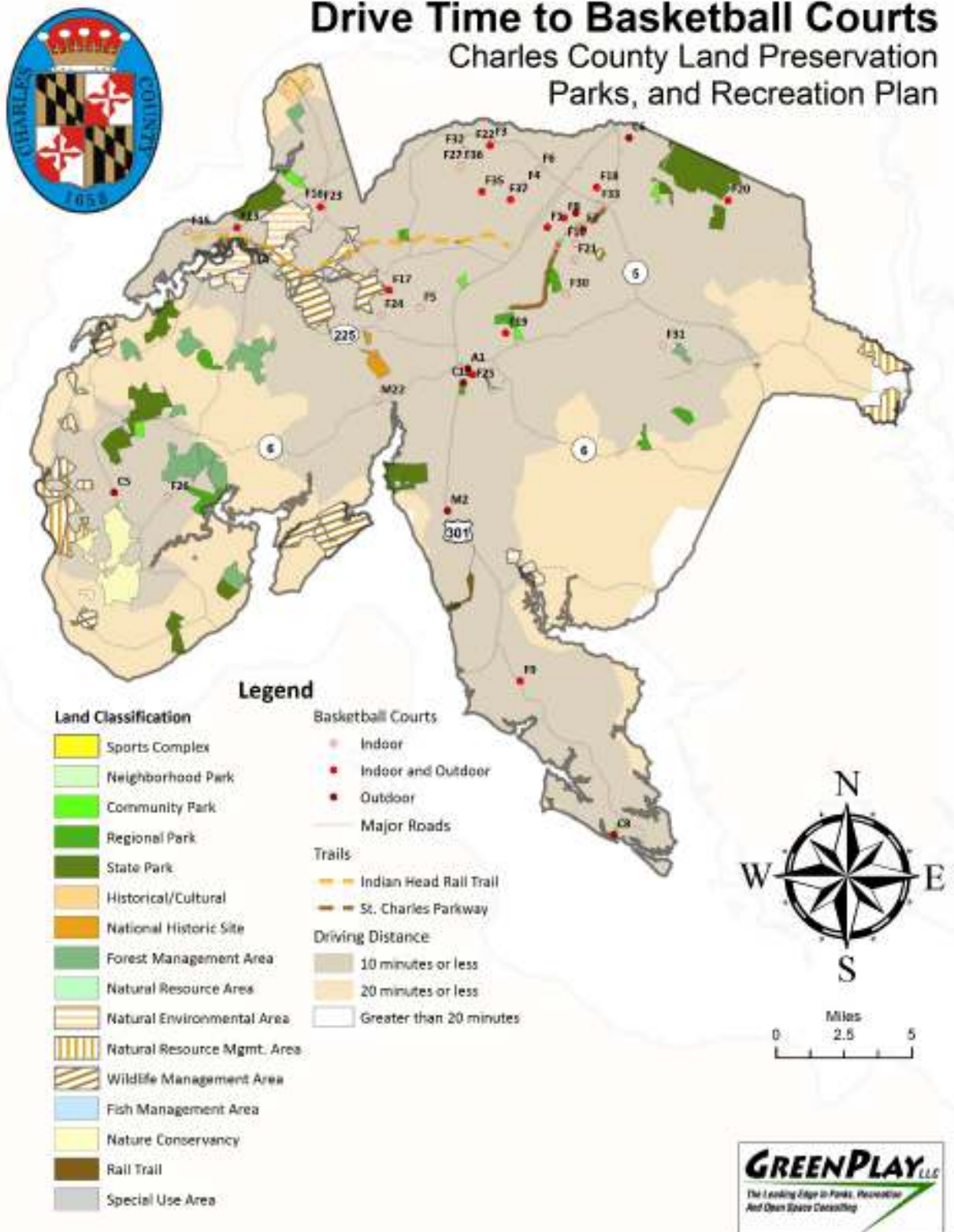
M23 – Regency Stadium

Sports Complex

N1 – Bryantown Soccer Complex

N2 – Robert Stethem Park

Map 7: Driving Distance to Basketball Courts



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

County school sites, community centers, and several parks in the Waldorf and La Plata area provide a mix of indoor and outdoor basketball courts with opportunities for public use. Within this northern area, and extreme southern portion of the County, basketball courts are generally accessible within a 10-minute drive of most locations. Other areas are further from these assets, most notably in the western portion of the County. Sites with basketball courts included:

Parks

Mini Park

A1 – Carroll La Plata Village

Neighborhood

B10 – St. Charles - Huntington Community Ctr.

Community

C5 – Nanjemoy Community Center

C6 – Pinefield Park

C8 – Southern Park

C12 – Wills Memorial Park

Public School Recreation Areas

F1 – Arthur Middleton ES

F2 – Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert Community Center

F3 – Berry ES

F4 – C. Paul Barnhart ES

F5 – College of Southern Maryland

F6 – Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES

F8 – Dr. Samuel Mudd ES

F9 – Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center

F10 – Eva Turner ES

F13 – General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center

F14 – Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool

F15 – Indian Head ES

F16 – J.C. Parks ES

F17 – James Craik Elementary School

F18 – John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School

F19 – La Plata HS & Pool and Matula Elem. School

F20 – Malcolm ES

F21 – Mary Burgess Neal ES

F22 – Mattawoman Middle School and Mattawoman Community Center

F23 – Matthew Henson Middle School and Henson Community Center

F24 – Maurice McDonough HS and Pool

F25 – Milton M. Somers Middle School and Somers Community Center

F26 – Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES

F27 – North Point High School & Community Pool

F30 – St. Charles HS & Community Pool

F31 – T.C. Martin ES

F32 – Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center

F33 – Thomas Stone HS and Pool

F35 – Westlake HS

F36 – William A. Diggs ES

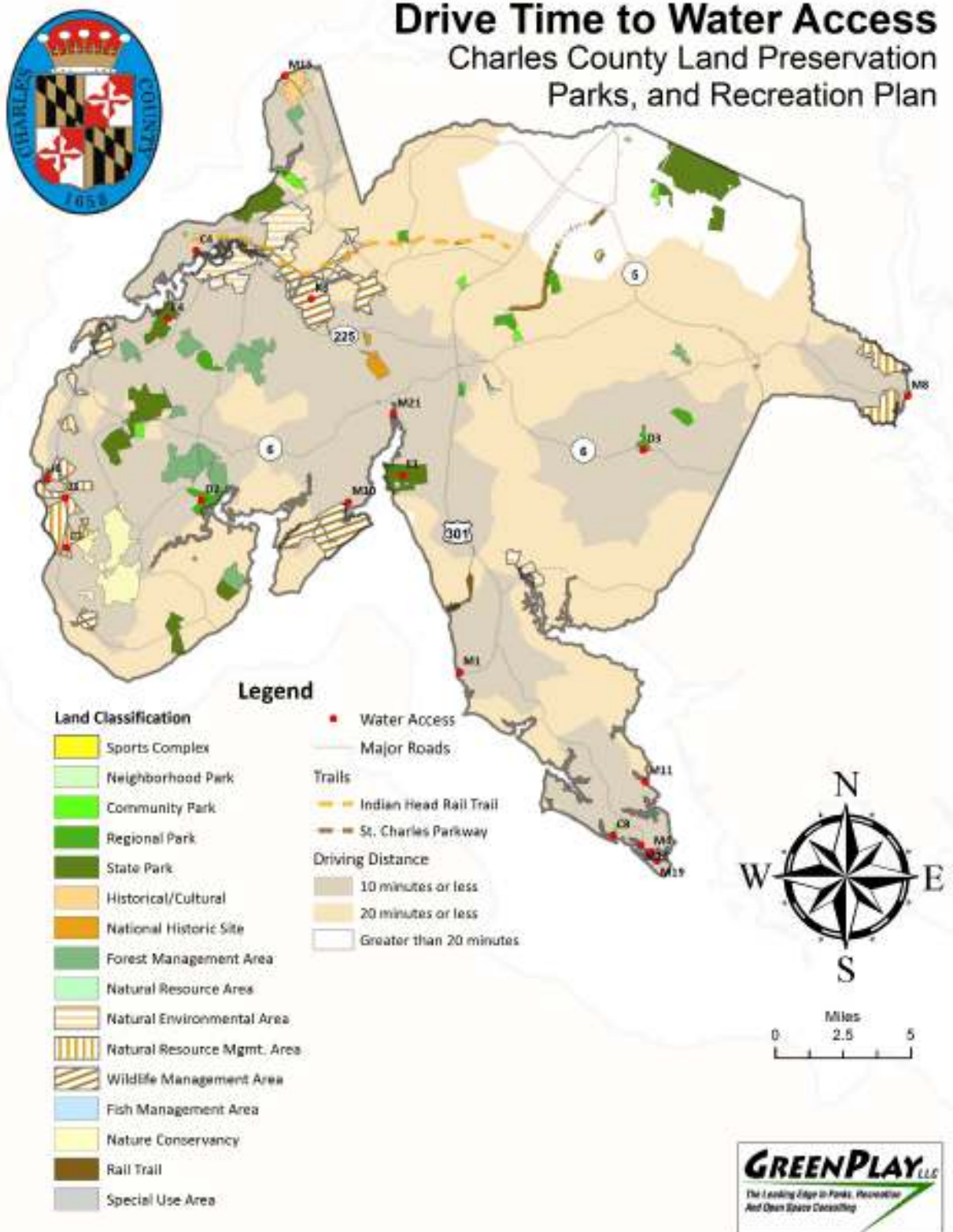
F37 – William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

Special Use Area

M2 – Bel Alton High School

M22 – Port Tobacco Recreation Center

Map 8: Driving Distance to Water Access Sites



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

There are 19 sites within the County that provide boating access for canoes, kayaks, and larger trailered watercraft. Most of these launch areas are located in southern and western areas. Enhancing water access for the public has been a long-term goal of Charles County and many other Chesapeake Bay communities. Sites with public water access included:

Parks

Community

C4 – Mattingly Park

C8 – Southern Park

Regional

D2 – Friendship Farm Park

D3 – Gilbert Run Park

State

E1 – Chapel Point State Park

E3 – Purse State Park

E4 – Smallwood State Park

Natural Resource Areas

J3 – Douglas Point State NRMA

J6 – Mallows Bay Park

Wildlife Mgmt. Area

K3 – Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area

Special Use Area

M1 – Aqua Land Campgrounds and Marina

M4 – Captain John's Marina

M8 – Desoto/Benedict Marina, Inc.

M10 – Goose Bay Marina and Campsites

M11 – Hatton Creek Boat Ramp

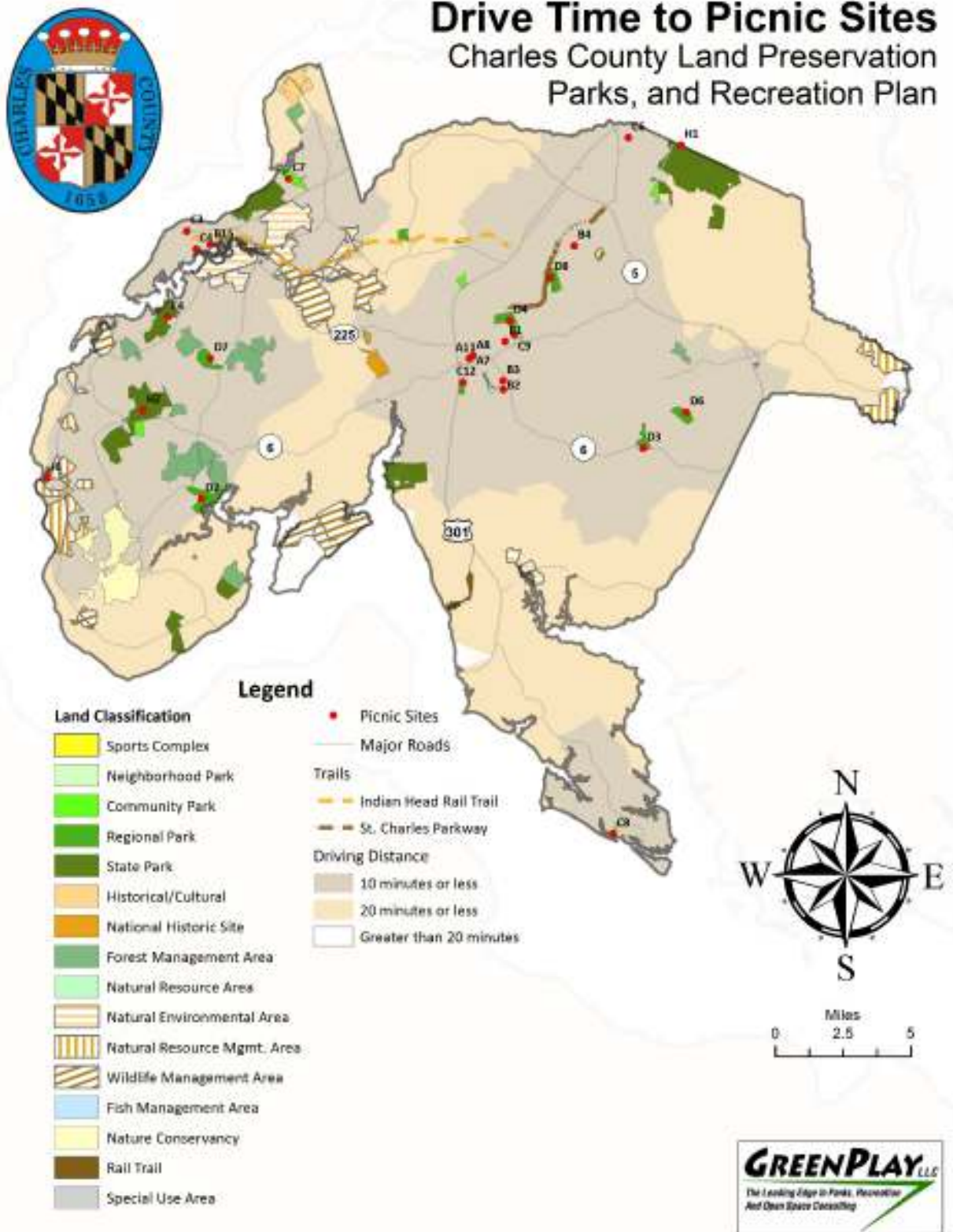
M15 – Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility

M19 – Pirates Dens Marina

M21 – Port Tobacco Marina and Campground

M24 – Saunders Marina

Map 9: Driving Distance to Picnic Sites



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

Over two dozen sites in Charles County provide picnic areas and/or pavilions for public use. Approximately 50% of the County is within a 10-minute drive of one of these assets, and majority of areas are within no more than a 20-minute drive of a picnic facility. Public picnic areas are found at the following sites in Charles County:

Parks

Mini Park

A7 – Phoenix Run Park I

A8 – Phoenix Run Park II

A11 – Train Station

Neighborhood

B1 – Agricopia Park

B2 – Redwood Lake

B3 – Silver Linden Park

B4 – St. Charles - Bannister Neighborhood Center

B15 – Woodland Village Neighborhood Park

Community

C3 – Indian Head Village Green and Senior Center

C4 – Mattingly Park

C6 – Pinefield Park

C7 – Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park

C8 – Southern Park

C9 – Tilghman Lake Park

C12 – Wills Memorial Park

Regional

D2 – Friendship Farm Park

D3 – Gilbert Run Park

D4 – Laurel Springs Park

D6 – Oak Ridge Park

D7 – Pisgah Park

D8 – White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E4 – Smallwood State Park

State Forest

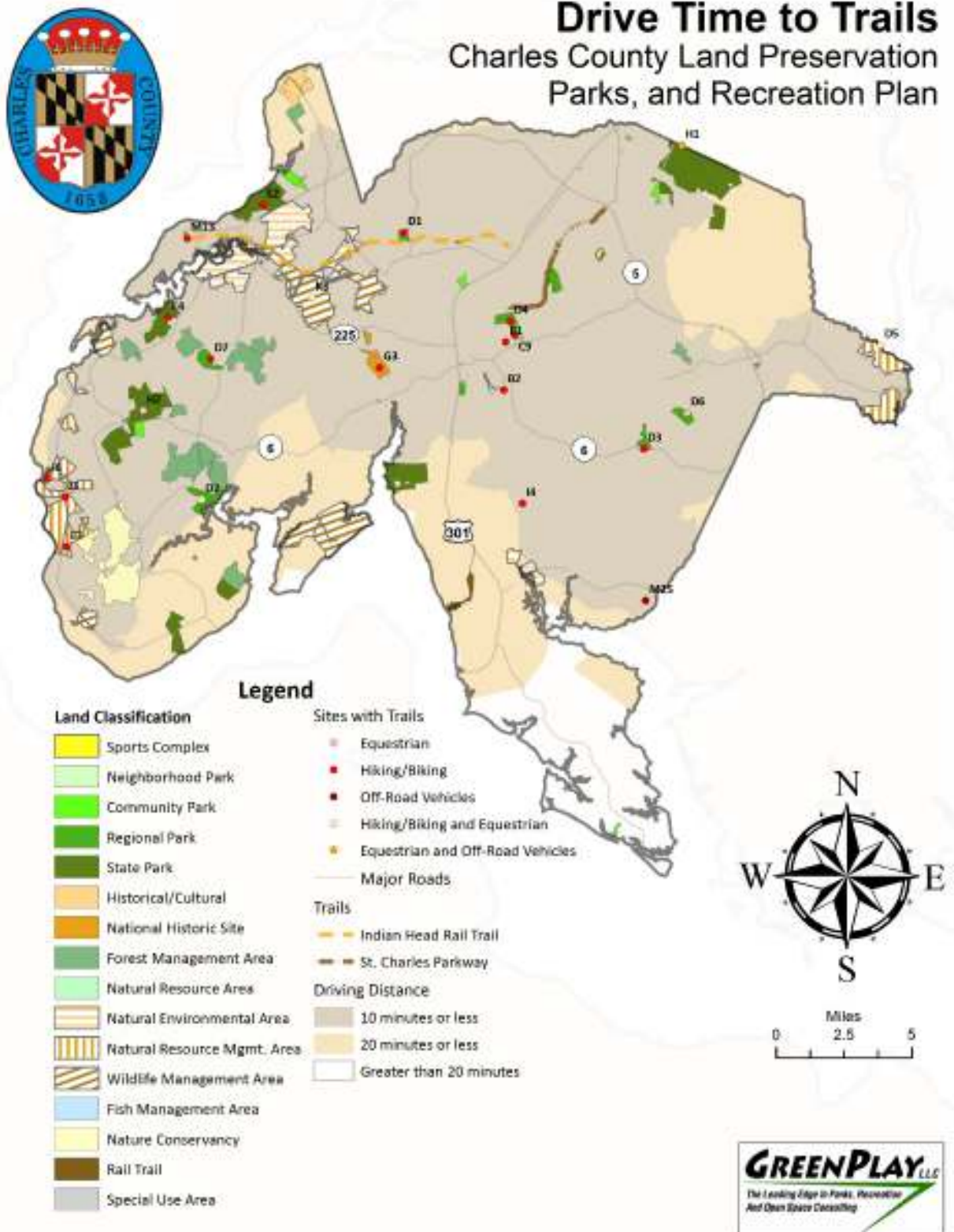
H1 – Cedarville State Forest

H2 – Doncaster State Forest

Natural Resource Areas

J6 – Mallows Bay Park

Map 10: Driving Distance to Sites with Trails



Source: Charles County Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and GreenPlay, LLC

The national popularity and practicality of trails and bike paths for providing opportunities for the public to walk, run, and cycle outdoors is reflected well in Charles County. There were 22 public parks and natural areas in the County that provided dedicated trails. The majority of the mid-section of the County was within a 10-minute drive of a park or open space with trails. Portions in the northeast and southwestern areas of the County were within a 20-minute drive of a site with trails. The southernmost portion of the County was more than 20 minutes away from the nearest site with a dedicated publicly accessible trails system. Existing trail types in Charles County ranged from simple natural-surfaced hiking trails to the Indian Head Rail Trail, a 13-mile long, paved multiple use trail extending from the Town of Indian Head, eastward to White Plains. The Indian Head Rail Trail is reported be heavily utilized, and serves as a key regional piece of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Designated publicly accessible trails in Charles County are found at sites including:

Parks

Neighborhood

B1 – Agricopia Park

B2 – Redwood Lake

Community

C9 – Tilghman Lake Park

Regional

D1 – Bensville Park

D2 – Friendship Farm Park

D3 – Gilbert Run Park

D4 – Laurel Springs Park

D5 – Maxwell Hall Park

D6 – Oak Ridge Park

D7 – Pisgah Park

State

E2 – Chapman State Park

E3 – Purse State Park

E4 – Smallwood State Park

Historic/Cultural

G3 – Thomas Stone National Landmark
State Forest

H1 – Cedarville State Forest

H2 – Doncaster State Forest

Natural Environmental Area

I4 – Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area

Natural Resource Areas

J3 – Douglas Point State NRMA

J6 – Mallows Bay Park

Wildlife Mgmt. Area

K3 – Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area

Special Use Area

M13 – Indian Head Rail Trail

M25 – Southern MD ATV Park

Public trail systems within the County were reported to be well used. Statewide and throughout Southern Maryland, there has been an increased focus on using trails to build pedestrian and bicycle friendly connections between the places people live, work, play, and shop.

E. Level of Service Analysis Findings

Each portion of the level of service analysis utilized different means to gather data and ideas, and gauge how well the existing system of parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces in Charles County met the expectations and needs of existing users. As of June 2017, the collective analysis yielded the following findings regarding overall strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that helped shape 2017 goals for parks and recreation, and are likely to impact in the County's management of the parks system and provision of recreation services over the next five years:

1. **The existing system of public parks, open spaces, and recreation infrastructure is a key community asset directly linked to the general high quality of life in Charles County.**
 - a. Key benefits included:
 - i. Ecosystem services and environmental engagement.
 - ii. Public health and wellness.
 - iii. Preservation of coastal and rural landscape character.
 - iv. Economic activity.
 - v. Diverse, low-cost, and close to home public recreation options.
2. **Tremendous public outdoor recreation opportunities exist in the County, but enhancement of basic facilities and services to support participation in outdoor recreation activities were identified as clear needs.** Existing local demand for trails, waterfront recreation opportunities, and other natural resource based recreation activities appeared strong, a finding supported by national participation trends.
 - a. **Trails** – ongoing County efforts to expand and connect its system of on and off-road trails, including the popular Indian Head Rail Trail, should continue to be a major focus for the County.
 - b. **Waterfront recreation** – long standing, active County effort to acquire waterfront property suitable for park development should continue to be a priority. Such sites are difficult to acquire and develop, but could provide significant public benefit.
3. **Overall, levels of usage and satisfaction with existing County facilities and recreation programs was high. Existing demand appears to outweigh facility/program capacity for organized sports and water access sites at least occasionally.** County and municipal parks, recreation facilities, and programs-focused service provision on non-natural resource based recreation services, such as the operation of sports complexes, playgrounds, and pools.
 - a. Many sports programs and leagues in the County utilize fields, gyms, and other facilities at County school sites for games and practices. These facilities are critical components of the public recreation system in Charles County. Existing use arrangements between the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, County Board of Education, and individual school principals should be strengthened.
4. **With continued growth in the local population projected, existing strong rates of participation in recreation, and demand for certain existing facilities occasionally exceeding capacity, expansion of the parks and recreation facility inventory and operational capacity of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism will likely be needed to ensure the recreational needs and expectations of residents and visitors continue to be met or exceeded.**

F. Goals and Recommendations

Goals and recommendations of the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan considered all information gathered through the planning process, as well as existing overarching plans and programs of the state and county that guide land preservation and recreation service provision for the public. The 2017 goals build off of Charles County's past goals, existing service provision, and current needs identified through the level of service analysis. Goals are listed in no particular order of importance, with each one being of equal significance in maintaining and enhancing open space preservation and provision of recreational services and amenities to County residents and visitors. Charles County's FY2017-FY2022 Capital Improvement Program for parks and recreation (**Figure 5**) includes a series of projects over the next five years that directly support the achievement of these goals.

Goal 1

Continue to maintain and develop parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, and programming to meet the diverse needs of a growing resident and visitor user base.

Recommendations:

- a) As the County grows, its inventory of park and recreation assets and programs, the resources of the Parks Division and Recreation Division should increase in a corresponding manner to ensure high quality program delivery, facility maintenance, and infrastructure management.
- b) Continue to work with the public and stakeholders to identify and capitalize on opportunities to enhance existing parks and recreational opportunities.
- c) Continue to coordinate park land acquisition and open space conservation with natural resource protection considerations.
- d) Seek to enhance accessibility at park and recreation facilities for members of the community with physical, mental, or other disabilities in accordance with federal ADA requirements.
- e) Develop a formal memorandum of understanding between the Board of Education and County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism to guide the future shared use and management of school recreation facilities.

Goal 2

Develop new parks, recreation facilities, and associated amenities where existing demand appears to be exceeding the capacity of the existing parks and recreation system.

Recommendations:

- a) Seek to acquire waterfront property capable of being developed for the purposes of recreation.
- b) Pursue the development of a large parks and recreation complex in or near Waldorf. Such a facility should include indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, including sports courts and athletic fields.
- c) As part of the approval process for granting Critical Area Growth Allocation, require public access to the water, where feasible.

Goal 3

Continue to build an interconnected system of trails and paths throughout the County for non-automotive use.

Recommendations:

- a) Continue to implement the existing bicycle and pedestrian Master plan goals and objectives.
- b) Continue the development of the Popes Creek Rail Trail.
- c) Continue to evaluate existing corridors, rights-of-way, and other potential trail linkages for future development.
- d) Seek to acquire additional rights-of-way and open space through zoning and subdivision dedication requirements.
- e) Leverage the success of the Indian Head Rail Trail to build support for future public trail projects.
- f) Continue to support the Maryland Department of Natural Resources efforts to create and promote water trails.

III. Natural Resource Land Conservation

The existing landscape of Charles County is defined by its natural lands including forests, rivers, abundant wetlands, and 183 miles of shoreline. These areas support biodiversity and provide other ecosystem services needed by the public, such as wetlands filtering drinking water and forests cleansing the air. Areas preserved for the natural resource values within the County also provide abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation and serve a major function in defining County character and quality of life of residents. The natural landscape of Charles County generally consists of:

- Nearly level upland plateaus
- Steeply sloped areas between uplands and low terraces
- Shoreline stream terraces
- Floodplains and tidal marsh

95,152 acres
of land protected and preserved in Charles County for natural resource protection and open space preservation purposes as of December 2016.

Connecting People with Nature

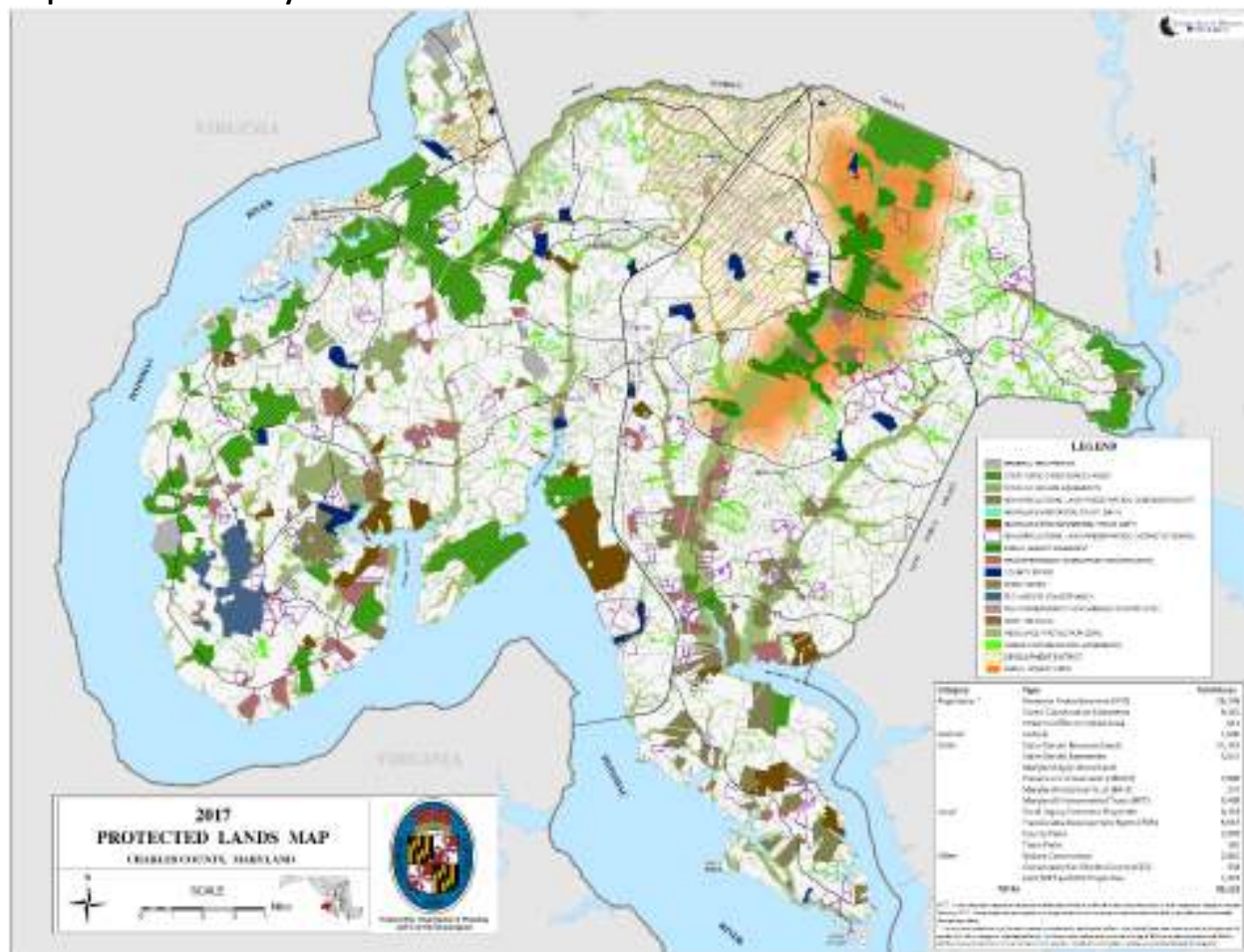
Parks, open spaces, and other preserved lands in Charles County are not only considered highly valuable for the critical natural resource value, and functions they protect, but also for the abundant and varied opportunities they provide for outdoor recreation and engagement with nature. This has been significant to the quality of life for residents for many years. The desirability of experiencing the natural beauty of the County's landscape is also sought out by visitors. In fact, the 2012 "Charles County Tourism Destination Plan Study" identified "natural resources," including State and County parks, as a primary magnet for visitors to the County.

A. Goals and Objectives for Natural Resource Land Conservation

The total land area in Charles County is 294,404 acres. The County has established the goal to protect 50% of its land area, or 147,202 acres, as open space in its 2006 "Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan." This goal remains valid, and as of December 2016, the County protected 95,152 acres of land, approximately 64% of the goal and 32% of the total County land area. An additional 52,050 acres will need to be preserved for the County to meet its goal of protecting half of its total land area. Included in the updated acreage total are 1,200 acres of recently preserved lands, which highlights the County's continued commitment to conserving local natural resources, and environmentally significant landscapes. **Appendix D** includes an inventory of lands managed by the County and Maryland Department of Natural Resources, many of which are significant to preserving natural resources and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Map 11 illustrates land throughout Charles County protected by multiple parks, natural resources, and agricultural land preservation programs. A larger, more easily readable version of **Map 12** is included in the appendix.

Map 11: Charles County Protected Lands 2017



Source: Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management

Charles County had several major accomplishments with respect to natural resource land conservation since the 2012 LPPRP. They include partnering with MD DNR to develop an Ecosystem Service Assessment for the County, creation of a new Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program, adoption of a septic tier map that includes 191,194 acres or 65% of the County as Tier IV, limiting that area to minor subdivisions, adoption of a Priority Preservation Area that includes 45% of the County, and the adoption of a new Watershed Conservation District land use and zoning designation that re-zones 35,000 acres to one unit per 20 acres and sets impervious surface limits.

Established by the County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 5: Natural Resource Protection) the current goals, and policies that serve as the backbone of Charles County natural resource protection and open space conservation strategy consist of the following.

2016 Charles County Natural Resource Conservation Goals and Objectives:

1. *Maintain a safe and healthy environment by protecting air, water, and land resources, and preventing the degradation of those resources from pollutants.*
2. *Protect 50% of Charles County as open space.*
3. *Implement and enforce the County's Critical Area Program, which is designed to foster more sensitive development along the shoreline so as to minimize damage to water quality and wildlife habitats.*
4. *Preserve and enforce the Resource Protection Zone as a buffer to ensure protection of sensitive inland and environmental features in stream valleys outside the Critical Area, such as the Mattawoman Creek, Zekiah Swamp Run, Gilbert Swamp Run, Port Tobacco River, Nanjemoy, Swanson, and Indian Creek watersheds.*
5. *Protect the habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species to maintain their long-term survival and biodiversity.*
6. *Conserve large tracts of contiguous forestland and forest interior dwelling bird habitat (FIDS) determined to be of significance due to their value for wildlife habitat, water quality, and air quality.*
7. *Promote awareness of environmental issues through public outreach, public access, and educational programs to cultivate a basic understanding of the natural environment and its valuable resources.*
8. *Provide public access to open space, forestland, and the waterfront as an amenity to an enhanced quality of life.*

In addition to the County's goals, the State of Maryland has established goals for natural resource land conservation, as documented in **Appendix G**. The goals of the County and State share the same general purpose and intended outcomes – to protect and preserve the natural resources, lands, and beneficial functions and values they provide to the public.

B. County Natural Resource Conservation Focus Areas and Protection Programs

The primary resources utilized by Charles County to achieve its goals for natural resource conservation include land acquisition and easement programs, federal, state, and county land use and environmental regulatory programs and agencies, and regional and local planning. The Charles County 2016 Comprehensive Plan's *Inventory of Natural Resources with Associated Programs* outlines the County's planning and regulatory programs focused on protecting lands, natural resources, and environmental quality.

Focus Areas of Charles County Natural Resource Planning, Regulation, and Conservation Programs:

1. *Air Quality*
2. *Geology, Soils, and Topography*
3. *Waterways, Floodplains, and Wetlands*
4. *Forests*
5. *Habitat and Wildlife*
6. *Shorelines*
7. *Watershed Management*

1. Air Quality

Charles County is a member of the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, and as such, is certified to participate in preparing an air quality plan for the Washington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland area as required by the federal Clean Air Act. The Comprehensive Plan notes concern with existing ozone pollution known to persist in the Interstate 95 corridor that may impact the northern portion of the County.

2. Geology, Soils, and Topography

The entirety of Charles County is underlain by layers of sand, gravel, silt, and clay. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Natural Resource Conservation Service Soil Survey” for the Charles County area, high water tables are prevalent, and soil layers are intermixed. In sloped areas, especially those near streams, wetlands, or other water bodies, County ordinances encourage the preservation of steep slopes (those greater than 15% grade), and require erosion and sediment control permitting for proposed development projects.

The County’s Codes, Permits, and Inspections Division, as well as the Charles Soil Conservation District review, permit, and enforce erosion and sediment control plans, other development regulations, and significant activities involving land disturbance.

3. Waterways, Floodplains, and Wetlands

Charles County recognizes the tremendous functions served by its abundant rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplains. These areas are the landscape’s drainage system and serve to support biodiversity; cleanse water of sediment, nutrients, and debris; recharge ground water, moderate flooding; and mitigate the impacts of storm damage to the built environment.

The County estimates there are 35,000 acres of vegetated wetlands within its jurisdiction and seeks to protect these natural features and their functions through:

- **Resource Protection Zone (RPZ):** a zoning overlay area applying to streams within the County that are outside of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area in which most forms of land development are prohibited, and allowed uses such as farming require management plans. The RPZ also establishes “buffer” zones around streams, wetlands, and other associated resources in which land development activity is regulated. As of December 2016, The Resource Protection Zone covers 28,209 acres that is not part of other protected lands. This land is being targeted to help meet the overall 50% protection goal.
- **Floodplain Management Program and Floodplain Ordinance:** defines floodplain districts within the County and establishes regulations, restrictions, and permitting program for land development within regulated areas to protect public health and property, and minimize potential damage to the existing natural and built infrastructure within flood prone areas.
- **Wetland Protection:** is primarily managed through a joint permitting process, and enforcement programs of the Maryland Department of the Environment and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These agencies regulate alterations of any floodplain, inland or tidal wetland, or waterway.

Charles County landscape includes:
35,000 acres of Wetlands
164,600 acres of Forests
300+ miles of Shoreline

4. Forests

From the time of colonization, through the late 1800s, the majority of forested areas were cleared for agricultural uses. Since that time, large areas of the County have reverted back to forest cover. As of 2016, the County estimated that approximately 164,600 acres, or 56% of the County's total land, was forested, making it the dominant land use.

The County recognizes the natural resource values of its forests, especially those preserved in large patches, and actively works with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service to implement the recommendations of its 2009 "Strategic Forest Assessment" for Charles County. The County is proud to be the most forested county in eastern Maryland, and third most forested county in the State – behind western Maryland's Garrett and Allegany Counties.

5. Habitat and Wildlife

The woodlands, wetlands, fields, and coastlines of Charles County are teeming with flora and fauna. Many of these natural areas are significant spawning and nesting sites for some of the 45 species of mammals, 32 species of reptiles, 25 species of amphibians, and 273 species of birds known to inhabit the County.

The State of Maryland's Biodiversity Conservation Network (BioNet) and GreenPrint program identify areas in the County significant to the protection of species, natural communities, large contiguous tracts of ecologically significant areas and natural corridors that could serve to connect preserved areas, habitats, and system functions. Generally, the County's goals and programs for habitat and species conservation mirror those of the State, which illustrates the recognition of the shared values and efforts needed to be successful in preservation efforts.

- **BioNet** – prioritizes areas of statewide importance for the conservation of species and natural communities into a 5-tiered system, with Tier I being the most significant for conservation. Charles County includes over 34,202 acres of Tier I and II areas, and 129,165 acres of Tiers, III, IV, and Tier V.
- **Maryland GreenPrint** – identifies areas of high ecological value in the State and encourages protection of lands within these Targeted Ecological Areas. GreenPrint areas in Charles County are generally consistent with the County's identified priority areas for conservation as illustrated on the County's 2016 Land Use and Protected Lands maps in **Appendix E**.

Among the most sensitive ecological areas in the County are four state-designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). These areas include features that set them apart as "best examples" of unique ecosystems within Maryland. In addition to their special character, each is known to be home to at least one locally threatened or endangered species. Land disturbing activities and development within NHAs is regulated, with requirements that activities will have no adverse impacts on the plant and animal communities.

Natural Heritage Areas in Charles County:

1. *Allen's Fresh: NHA-16*
2. *Chicamuxen Creek: NHA-17*
3. *Popes Creek: NHA-18*
4. *Upper Nanjemoy Creek: NHA-19*

Land development and land disturbing activities have had, and will continue to have, the potential to negatively impact sensitive natural resource areas, including critical habitats. In areas of Charles County outside of NHAs, or the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, the County has promulgated subdivision regulations that include provisions to protect:

- Habitat of rare, threatened, and endangered species
- Fish spawning areas
- Submerged aquatic vegetation
- Forest interior dwelling bird habitat
- Colonial water bird nesting site

6. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

Charles County contains 300 plus miles of shoreline along tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay, per GIS data. To protect tidal waters and coastal areas, Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law was adopted in 1984. In June of 1989, Charles County's Critical Area Program was adopted and established criteria limiting development density and land uses and added protections for natural shoreline areas.

The Critical Area overlay zone determines development density. There are three overlay zones: Resource Conservation Zone, Limited Development Zone, and Intense Development Zone. Growth Allocation is the process by which an overlay zone may be changed to allow for an increase in density. Charles County's remaining Growth Allocation allowance, as of January 1, 2017, is 927.36 acres.

Coastal Resiliency and Ongoing Management Actions

The Charles County shoreline has experienced varying degrees of erosion over time. Areas of the County that experience some of the highest rates of shoreline erosion are on the Potomac shoreline from Sandy Point south to lower Thomas Point, Blossom Point to Windmill Point, the eastern shore of Port Tobacco River to Pope's Creek, and the southwestern shore of Cobb Island. In some areas of the Potomac, bluffs are as high as 50 feet.

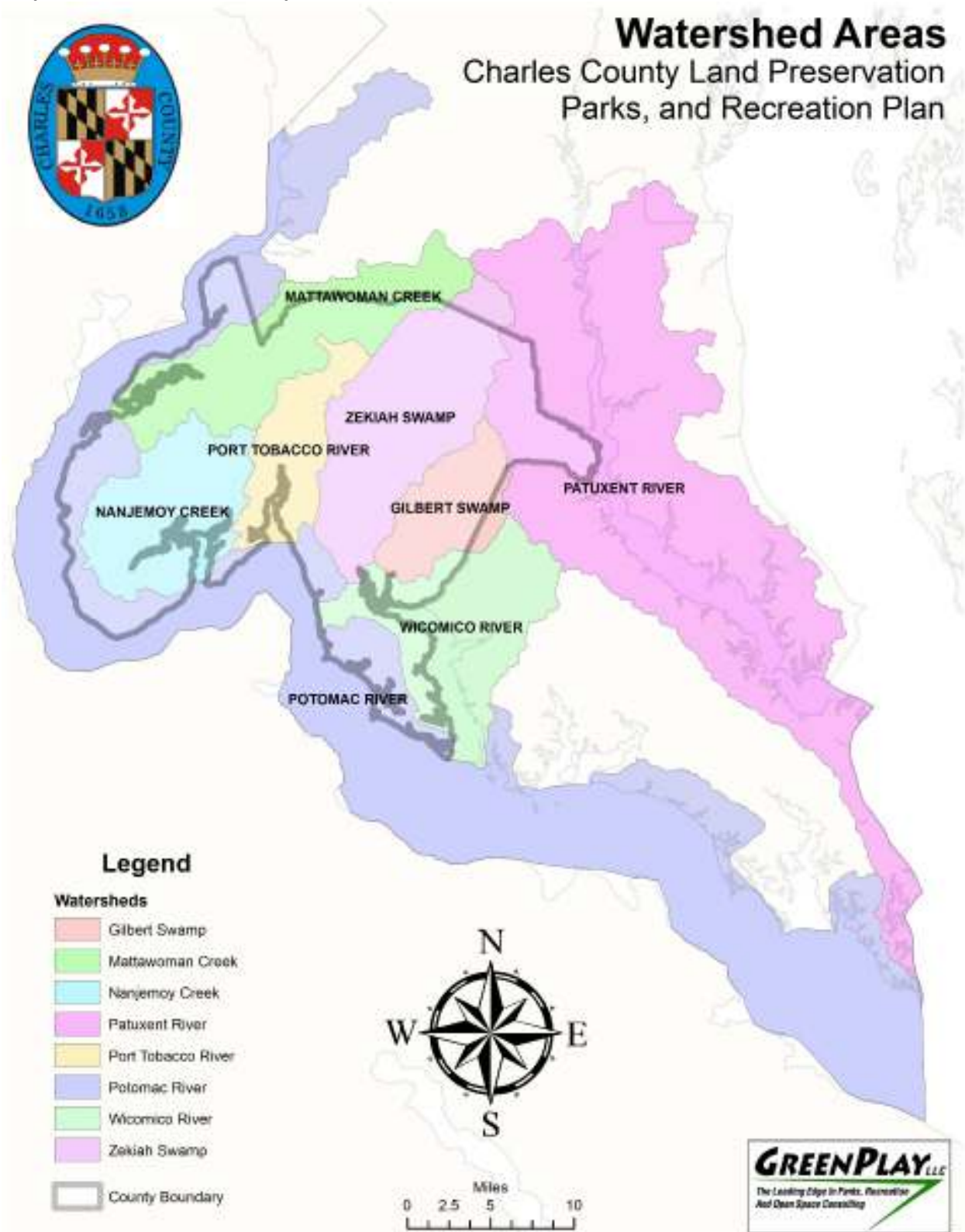
The Living Shoreline Protection Act of 2008 requires that improvements to protect a person's property against shoreline erosion consist of marsh creation or other nonstructural shoreline stabilization measures that preserve the natural environment. To help meet requirements of the County's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Discharge Elimination Permit (NPDES), the County has initiated projects to restore shoreline on County owned properties. In addition, the County is exploring opportunities to develop a program to incentivize shoreline restoration projects on private lands.

7. Watershed Management

Identified by the 2016 Comprehensive Plan as, "key to maintaining to improving water quality and other natural resources," watershed management and planning is considered an overarching County strategy for achieving desired goals for resource protection overall. Land preservation for the purposes of conserving undeveloped land in its natural state is viewed as one of most cost effective watershed, and natural resource protection tools available to the County. Focus areas identified by the Comprehensive Plan include the seven watersheds noted below and illustrated on **Map 12**. Each area encompasses many thousands of acres, and has been assessed as an area of particularly high natural resource value and high priority for conservation by various federal, state, County, and non-profit environmental organizations.

1. Mattawoman Creek Watershed
2. Zekiah Swamp Watershed
3. Gilbert Swamp Watershed
4. Port Tobacco River Watershed
5. Nanjemoy Creek Watershed
6. Patuxent River Watershed
7. Wicomico River Watershed
8. Potomac River Watershed

Map 12: Watershed Areas Map



Source: Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management and GreenPlay, LLC

Role of Land Conservation and Associated Significant Funding Sources

With the preservation of land determined to be a preferred means of protecting natural resources and open space, Charles County has sought to leverage funding from multiple sources to implement its policies and actions for natural resource conservation. These funds, often in the forms of grants, are combined with additional County funds to purchase easements, development rights, and fee simple acquisitions of properties determined to be significant to advancing the County's goals for conserving areas rich in natural resource value for the overall public benefit. Major sources of funding for County natural resource land conservation programs include: Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Maryland's Rural Legacy Program, USFWS, and Maryland's Program Open Space.

The U.S. Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program, otherwise known as REPI, provides funding to help purchase conservation easements where the federal government has an interest in protecting areas near military bases from encroaching development. Charles County contains two REPI eligible focus areas, one in the Cobb Neck region and the other on the western side, bordering the Potomac River. These two areas are also within the County's Priority Preservation Area as further described in Chapter IV of this Plan. As endorsed by the Charles County Land Preservation Advisory Board, this Plan recommends the designation of a new Rural Legacy Area that is targeted within the County's Priority Preservation Area and is REPI funding eligible. Focus and emphasis should be placed on an area that demonstrates landowner interest in land preservation programs and the presence of land that contain high value agricultural and natural resources.

Program Open Space – State of Maryland, Department of Natural Resources

Maryland's Program Open Space has been, and will continue to be, a relied upon resource that assists Charles County in acquiring lands significant to natural resource protection. The Stateside funding from the Program has been used in partnership projects between the Department of Natural Resources and County to purchase large properties for conservation purposes. Program Open Space Localside funding has also been leveraged to acquire park land and to assist in provision of basic amenities at parks and open space sites to provide public access to outdoor recreation opportunities and promote engagement with nature.

C. Policies and Actions

As specified by the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, the following policies and actions have been recommended for guiding natural resource land conservation efforts in the County.

General Policies:

1. Place special emphasis on watershed management to balance the protection of the Mattawoman Creek's natural resources and water quality within the County's development plans. In addition to the Priority Preservation Area (PPA), the Mattawoman Creek watershed should be targeted for acquisition for conservation purposes.
2. Implement and enhance the County's environmental preservation and conservation objectives through administrative mechanisms including subdivision regulations, sediment and erosion control, environmental review processes, development regulations, and zoning.

3. Continue to coordinate and implement the goals and objectives of adopted policy plans including the Patuxent River Policy Plan, the Wicomico Scenic River Study and Management Plan, the Zekiah Swamp Rural Legacy Area Plan, the Port Tobacco River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, the Lower Potomac River Coordinated Management Plan (Nanjemoy Peninsula), and other watershed restoration and management plans including watershed implementation plans.
4. Guide development away from areas vulnerable to natural hazards – especially areas subject to flooding, storm surge, and shore erosion.
5. Require best management practices including low-impact development techniques to minimize the impacts of development on the natural environment.
6. Through public and private resources, purchase (or otherwise acquire) conservation easements to preserve environmentally sensitive resources. Develop parks, recreation, and open space plans in conjunction with stream valley protection objectives.
7. Work cooperatively with the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee to ensure the area complies with the requirements of the 1992 Clean Air Act.
8. Utilize the State of Maryland’s GreenPrint maps for Targeted Ecological Areas as a guide to focus conservation efforts in Charles County.

Land Resources Policies:

1. Restrict development within 100-year floodplains.
2. Conserve remaining wooded areas in the County. Pursue grant opportunities or other programs to increase, enhance, and protect forests, and require new native plantings to support other natural resource objectives including enhancing riparian buffers, reducing erosion and sedimentation, improving air quality, and mitigating the effects of stormwater runoff.
3. Retain as much of the forest and tree cover as practical within urban areas.
4. Require special engineering and construction standards when development occurs on erodible soils, steep slopes, or areas requiring special geotechnical consideration.
5. Promote wildlife education through the development of nature centers and park visitor centers to explain the importance of preserving natural habitat areas.
6. In order to implement U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stream valley protection measures, amend the zoning code to better protect the Resource Protection Zone in stream valley areas to the top of the slope.

Shorelines Policies:

1. Place a high degree of restriction on the use of waterfront land in the form of low residential densities, and high level of protection for forest land and agricultural land regulated under the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program.
2. Protect in stream and stream bank habitats of anadromous fish spawning waters. Promote land use policies in the watersheds of spawning streams that minimize adverse impacts to aquatic resources.
3. Protect shoreline habitats such as tidal wetlands, shellfish harvesting areas, colonial water bird nesting sites, and waterfowl staging and concentration areas through the habitat protection policies established in the County’s Critical Area Program.
4. Manage development in the shoreline area to minimize problems of shoreline erosion.

Actions:

1. **Mattawoman Stream Valley:** Change the zoning and development regulations regarding standards to increase protection of the Mattawoman Stream Valley.
2. **Stream Valley Protection:** Use State grant funds and County funds as available to target stream valley protection through land acquisition or conservation easements.
3. In order to further protect stream valley areas in the County, review and revise as needed:
 - a. Low impact design standards in the Stormwater Management Ordinance.
 - b. Impervious coverage standards in the Zoning Ordinance.
 - c. Regulations to ensure protection of Tier II streams and other designated sensitive natural resource areas, including expanding riparian buffer requirements.
4. **Urban Forests:** Evaluate the existing urban forest and consider adopting an urban forest canopy coverage goal.
5. **Limit Forest Fragmentation:** Adopt regulations that protect forest hubs (greater than 100 acres) and forest corridors for the survival of the remaining biodiversity and Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) of Charles County. Under the Forest Conservation Ordinance, add a requirement that priority forests be maintained on development sites, unless a variance is granted by the Board of Appeals.
6. **Shoreline:** Adopt buffers and development setbacks from areas vulnerable to over three feet of sea level rise in the next 100 years to protect private and public investments and accommodate inland wetland migration.
7. **Transfer of Development Rights:** Enhance the effectiveness of the Transfer of Development Rights program.
8. **Habitat Protection:** Adopt Biodiversity Conservation Network Tier I and II categories as habitat protection areas, and increase protection in these areas.
9. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Resource Protection Zone (RPZ) regulations to enhance protections of stream valleys, especially those with assigned Total Maximum Daily Loads.
10. Apply to the State of Maryland to establish a new Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Rural Legacy Area designation.

IV. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

Charles County's current goals and priorities for agricultural land conservation, forestry, and fisheries are established in Chapter 11 of the 2016 "Comprehensive Plan." Programs targeting the preservation of farmland and forested areas are managed by the County through the Department of Planning and Growth Management. The County has historically relied on both state and local programs to support the acquisition of land and easements to preserve farmland and woodlands of key preservation value.

2016 Charles County Goals for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

- 1.1 Protect the land resources necessary to support the County's agricultural industry.
- 1.2 Maintain a productive forest land base and forest resource industry.
- 1.3 Promote and protect agricultural and natural resource industries, including opportunities for ecotourism, value added agricultural product processing, and the commercial seafood industry.

A. Agriculture

The 2016 "Comprehensive Plan" acknowledges a discrepancy in the total acreage of land in agriculture and forestry use in Charles County as of 2012. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency measure differs from that of the United States Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture for Charles County. The 2012 Census of Agriculture noted 46,659 acres of land in farm use in Charles County, whereas the Farm Service Agency counted four times as many farms totaling over 140,000 acres inclusive of 35,000 acres of cropland. As noted in the "Comprehensive Plan," the County believes the total amount of farmland in the county is likely closer to 212,000 acres.



Local Farm

Image Credit: Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management

The total market value of agricultural products from Charles County was estimated to be slightly less than \$9 million in the current “Comprehensive Plan.” The majority of farm income derived from crops, and the remainder from livestock operations. The County’s agricultural industry was generally characterized by relatively small farms, with roughly half the farms being smaller than 70

acres. The current agricultural industry of Charles County is significantly different than it had historically been from the time of colonization through about the 1960s. During that time, tobacco production was a major industry and was a significant employer of residents. Since then social and economic changes essentially made tobacco farming unsustainable, and state assistance programs help local farmers diversify former tobacco farm operations. Although not as large of an economic engine as it previously was, farming in Charles County is still an important part of local cultural identity and heritage, including the local Amish community.

“Agriculture is likely to continue to be driven by a small number of large farms that produce grain, and a growing number of small farms that produce nursery, greenhouse, and vegetable crops, and provide agro-tourism opportunities.”

2016 Comprehensive Plan

Priority Preservation Areas

Adoption of priority preservation areas in the Comprehensive Plan reflected local desire to maintain and support active agricultural activities in the County. Priority preservation areas include the most productive farm and forest land base in the County based on soils data and local knowledge.

Three priority preservation areas totaling 134,168 acres have been established in Charles County. These areas, illustrated in **Map 13** consist of:

- **Cobb Neck** – predominantly row crop farming and forest land. This area is also home to a sizable Amish community, whose culture is tied to agriculture.
- **Mattawoman Creek** – forested wetlands, floodplains, and agricultural land.
- **Nanjemoy Peninsula** – large forested tracts.

Priority Preservation Areas

- Contain productive agricultural or forest soils.
- Are governed by local codes and policies that limit development of agricultural and forest areas, and support the ability of working farms.
- Are large enough in acreage to support agricultural and forestry activities.
- Target preservation of at least 80% of the remaining undeveloped land in the area.

Map 13: Charles County Priority Preservation Areas 2017



Source: 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan

Acreage within the priority preservation areas totaled 134,168 acres. Of this land area, 26,645 acres were developed or approved for development, and 107,523 acres were not developed as of 2016. To meet the goal of protecting 80% of the existing undeveloped land in priority preservation areas (107,523 acres) the County must protect a total of 86,018 acres. Less than half of the undeveloped land in the Priority Preservation Area; 39,387 acres has already been protected by easement or public ownership, leaving 68,136 acres of undeveloped land potentially available for protection. Of the remaining unprotected, undeveloped land available for potential conservation, the County must protect 46,631 of those acres (or 68% of the remaining undeveloped land) to meet its goal for land protection in the Priority Preservation Area.

An additional 46,631 acres must be preserved for Charles County to meet its goal for land protection in priority preservation areas.

With an annual average preservation rate of 800 acres per year, the County would need 58 years to reach the preservation goal. The County believes this timeline is acceptable given that the PPA lies within Septic Map Tier IV, and 35,000 acres has been re-zoned to one unit per 20 acres, thereby stabilizing the land base and providing the necessary time for land preservation programs to work.

Since the completion of the last “Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan” in 2012, Charles County adopted a Tier Map in 2014 and designated priority preservation areas as Tier IV. This change allowed the County to limit the development of subdivisions dependent on on-site septic systems within priority preservation areas. The County has also taken steps to limit development density within the Watershed Conservation District, which contains the Mattawoman priority preservation area. Since 2012, a new Purchase of Development Rights program, which targets conservation easement funding opportunities within priority preservation areas, was adopted by the County. As reported in the 2016 “Comprehensive Plan,” voluntary interest in agriculture and forest land conservation programs has been high. Through the preservation programs of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, local transfer of development rights, and local purchase of development rights, the County estimates that an average of 800 acres of farm and forest land is currently being protected in priority preservation areas annually.

To achieve its land preservation goals within priority preservation areas, Charles County has adopted the following three policies:

- 1. Protect 80% of the remaining undeveloped land within the priority preservation area.*
- 2. Prioritize land acquisitions through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation and County purchase of development rights programs in the priority preservation areas.*
- 3. Fund (fully) County agricultural land preservation programs in order to best leverage opportunities for matching funds, and consistently acquire land within priority preservation areas.*

B. Forestry and Timberland

In 2016, forested land was the dominant land use in Charles County. In fact, the County is the third most forested by acres in Maryland. Roughly 56% of the land area was forested, with much of the existing wooded acreage found on private properties and farms, where timber harvesting is an important business. In a 2008 U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service assessment, Charles County was ranked second in the state for industrial hardwood production and sixth overall for hard and soft wood production. Programs such as the Sustainable Forest Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council programs that certify timber products as sustainably harvested has caught on with local landowners. Certified wood tends to earn them a higher price for products, and as of 2016, roughly 3,000 acres of forest land in the Charles County had been certified as sustainable.

The ecosystem services provided by forest lands are in some ways immeasurable, and Charles County has documented such in its Comprehensive Plan. However, the Comprehensive Plan also suggests that individual landowners of forested properties may be able to benefit financially in new ways as society sets monetary value on some of these ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration that promote retention of land in a forested or natural state. Charles County is currently working with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to develop an assessment of the County's ecosystem services.

C. Fisheries

The coastal and inland waterways of Charles County are known to support a high degree of biodiversity, as well as some of the most productive spawning areas and habitat areas of important commercial and game fish in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Major rivers in the County including the Potomac, Patuxent, and Wicomico; their tributaries; and associated tidal areas are historically known to be productive fisheries and shellfish grounds that support recreational and commercial fishing. These areas have supported generations of local fishing operations that have harvested crab, oysters, and striped bass, among other species. According to the 2016 "Comprehensive Plan," many local farmers and rural landowners depend on fishing, crabbing, and harvesting oysters to supplement their incomes.

Fishing and crabbing for recreation are also popular activities in Charles County. There has been, and continues to be, high demand for public recreational opportunities in waterfront areas, and a desire in the County to improve and expand the inventory of public boat ramps, and other shoreline facilities. Recreational fishing conditions and popularity of the sport in southern Maryland attract anglers from across the country for different tournaments annually. Many of these events are often hosted at Smallwood State Park.

D. Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation, Forestry, and Fisheries

As established in the 2016 "Comprehensive Plan," Chapter 11, the policies and actions guiding Charles County's preservation of agricultural lands, public and private forest resources, and natural resources critical to fisheries conservation include:

Policies

1. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are core targeted industries essential for job creation and the future quality of life of County residents. Minimize conflicts with other uses, especially residential.
2. Maintain the farmers' rights to farm.
3. Support marketing programs for the County's diverse agricultural offerings.
4. Assist farmers to maintain an economically viable agricultural and forest industry.
5. Support the ability of commercial watermen and recreational fishermen to have access to sustainable fisheries.
6. Focus agricultural preservation programs to those areas with a land use and zoning of agricultural conservation and designated priority preservation areas.

Actions

1. To supplement the existing land preservation programs the County offers, create a County purchase of development rights program using bond funding, a County transfer tax, and/or additional sources to ensure a dedicated funding source for the program. If a transfer tax is utilized, 50% of the money could be used for land preservation, and 50% could be used to fund infrastructure in priority funding areas to promote growth away from resource-based industries. Assign the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board authority to oversee and make recommendations regarding operation of the program.
2. Explore the use of a revolving loan fund for land trust to acquire and protect properties in farming areas. Establish a budget sufficient to start this preservation tool.
3. Revise the TDR program to incentivize their use, including amendments to the Forest Conservation Ordinance to allow TDRs from forested properties to satisfy requirements of the Forest Conservation Act. Continue to designate productive agricultural and forest land as sending areas for TDRs. Establish a workgroup to examine ways to balance TDR supply and demand as related to sending and receiving areas and make specific recommendations.
4. Expand the function and role of the existing Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board to monitor issues related to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. Include a charge to the board to meet with state and local agencies that work with these natural resource-based industries and report at least annually to the County commissioners.
5. Conduct a review of regulations to make it easier for agriculture, forestry, and seafood businesses to prosper, including:
 - a. Policies for agricultural worker housing.
 - b. Allowing processing facilities for livestock.
 - c. Promoting the development of Charles County's forest industry.
 - d. Amending the zoning ordinance to specifically allow value added processing, agro-tourism, and ecotourism uses.
6. Consider developing an area plan for key rural and eco-sensitive areas, to support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan.
7. Work closely with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission to grow the agricultural, forestry, and seafood economies in Charles County and Southern Maryland. Consider hiring a full-time agricultural marketing specialist if the role of the Commission diminishes.
8. Review the County's right to farm ordinance to ensure it is current and works to retain farm owners' property rights.
9. Work with the Board of Education to encourage agriculture classes in the public schools and return of the Future Farmers of America program.
10. Review regulations and recommend changes that would assist in retaining family members who continue farming operations.
11. Explore methods to retain large contiguous tracts of forest and discourage their fragmentation.
12. Promote sustainable forest industries and the use of forest stewardship planning throughout the county.
13. Encourage aquaculture enterprises, including the participation in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources oyster gardening program.

Appendix A: Demographic Profile – Charles County, Maryland

Introduction

Gaining a clear understanding of the existing and projected demographic character of the County is an important component of the planning process for the update of Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces. For example, if the population of young children was steadily on the rise and existing public recreation facilities for young children, such as playgrounds, were barely meeting existing user demand, then the County may want to consider targeting investments to meet the increasing needs of this growing segment of the population.

Key areas were analyzed to identify current demographic statistics and trends that can impact the planning and provision of public parks and recreation services in Charles County. The following general characteristics of the County's population were reviewed in preparation of this report:

- Existing and projected total population
- Age and gender distribution
- Ethnic/Racial diversity
- Household information
- Educational attainment
- Employment
- State and County Health Ranking

This demographic profile was completed using the most updated information available as of December 2016 from the Maryland Department of Planning State Data Center, U.S. Census Bureau, and U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. A summary of demographic highlights is noted in **Table 6** below, followed by a more detailed demographic analysis.

Table 6: 2015 Charles County General Demographic Profile

Population	156,118
Median Age	37.8
Households	55,375
Median Household Income	\$90,607

Source: Maryland Department of Planning and American Community Survey

Key general 2015 demographic comparisons – County, State, and National:

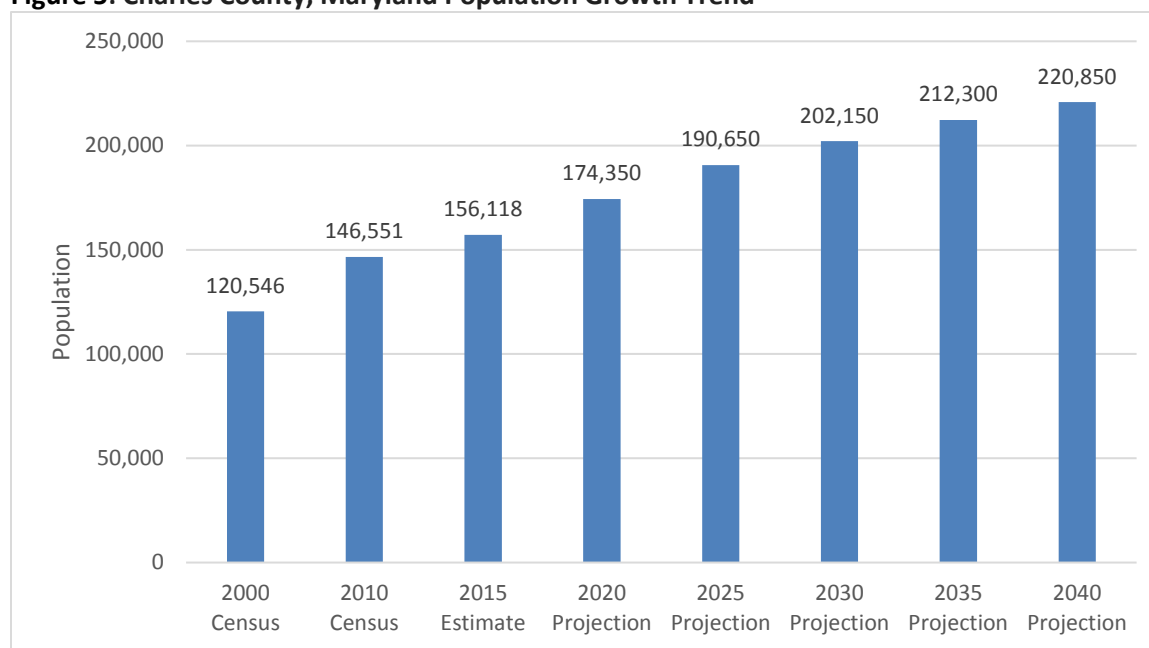
- The median age of Charles County residents was 37.8 years, slightly lower than the median age for Maryland (38.4) and slightly higher than median age in the United States (37.6).
- The median household income for Charles County residents in 2015 was estimated to be \$90,607. This is higher than both the median incomes of residents statewide (\$74,551) and nationally (\$53,889).
- Charles County’s estimated population was almost evenly split between male (48.3%) and female (51.7%) residents. The populations of Maryland (48.4% male, and 51.6% female), and the United States (49.2% male and 50.8% female), are also roughly evenly divided between the sexes.

Population and Demographic Trends

Population Projections

Although future population growth cannot be predicted with certainty, it is helpful to make growth projections for planning purposes. **Figure 5** contains actual population figures based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census for Charles County, 2015 estimated population from the Maryland Department of Planning, and population projections through 2040 from the Maryland Department of Planning. Based on this data, the County’s population has been experiencing steady growth, with this trend predicted to continue through 2040. Between 2015 and 2025, the Maryland Department of Planning has projected Charles County’s population to increase by 34,582, with an annual growth rate of 2.2%.

Figure 5: Charles County, Maryland Population Growth Trend

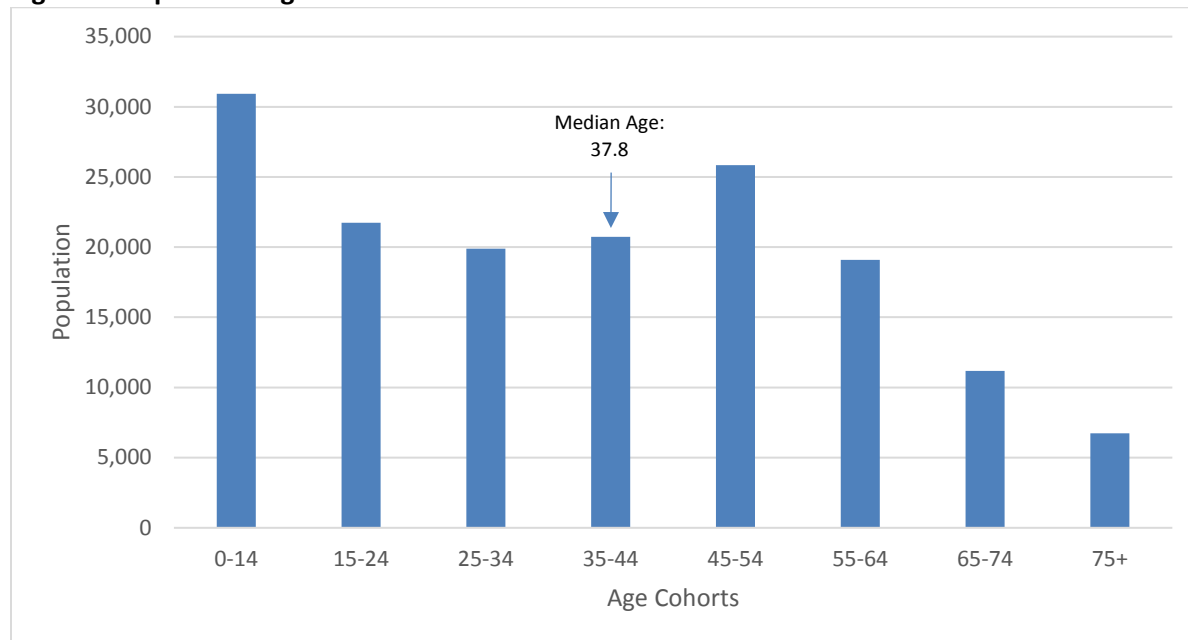


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, and Maryland Department of Planning

Population Age Distribution

As illustrated in **Figure 6**, the 2015 estimated County population included a high number of youth, teens, and young adults. Residents ages 45-54 comprised the second most populous age cohort.

Figure 6: Population Age Distribution 2015



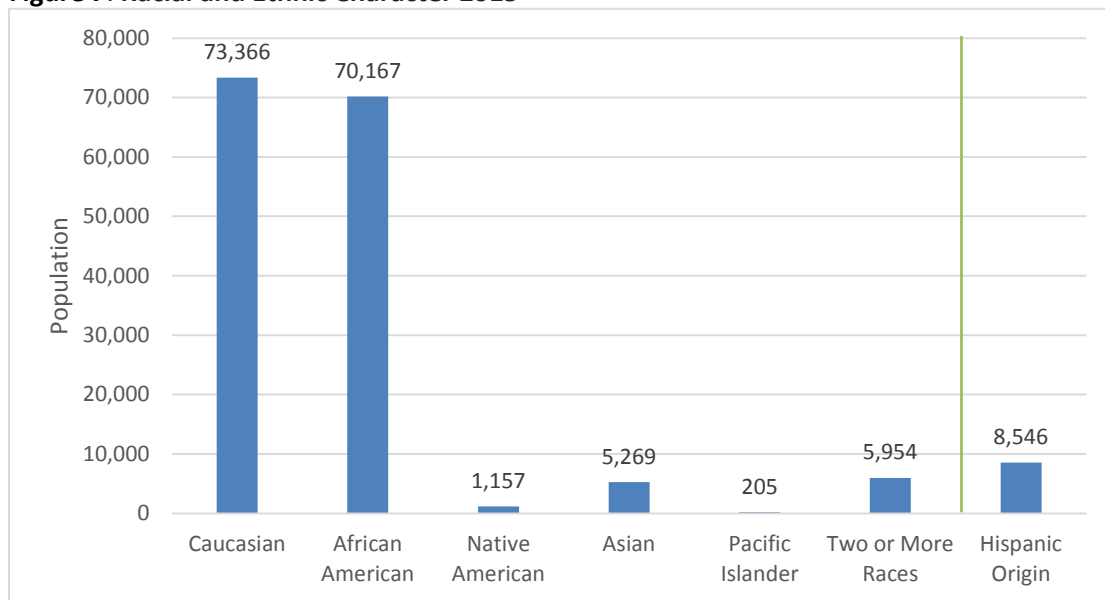
Source: Maryland Department of Planning

Race/Ethnicity

Prior to reviewing demographic data pertaining to a population's racial and ethnic character, it is important to note how the U.S. Census classifies and counts individuals who identify as of Hispanic. The Census notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race and are included in all of the race categories. All race categories add up to 100% of the population; the indication of Hispanic origin is a different view of the population and is not considered a race.

Figure 7 reflects the approximate racial and ethnic composition of Charles County's 2015 population as estimated by the Maryland Department of Planning. As illustrated, the majority of County residents identified as either Caucasian or African American. Combined, these two groups comprise roughly 92% of the County's 2015 population.

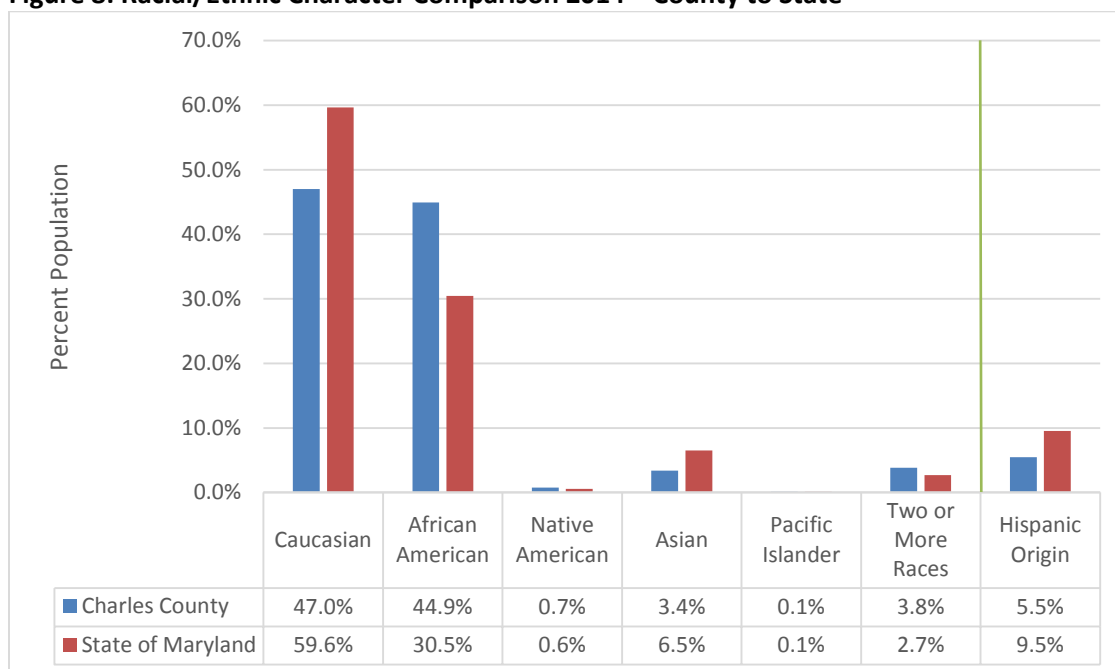
Figure 7: Racial and Ethnic Character 2015



Source: Maryland Department of Planning

As illustrated in **Figure 8**, in 2015, the majority of residents in both Charles County and the State of Maryland identified as either Caucasian or African American. However, the statewide population was estimated to include a higher percentage of Asian and Caucasian residents, as well as a 4% greater overall percentage of residents that identified as being of Hispanic origin. In Charles County, the population was estimated to be comprised of 14.4% more residents that identified as African Americans. Nearly 45% of Charles County's 2015 population was African American, in comparison to 30.5% of the statewide population.

Figure 8: Racial/Ethnic Character Comparison 2014 – County to State

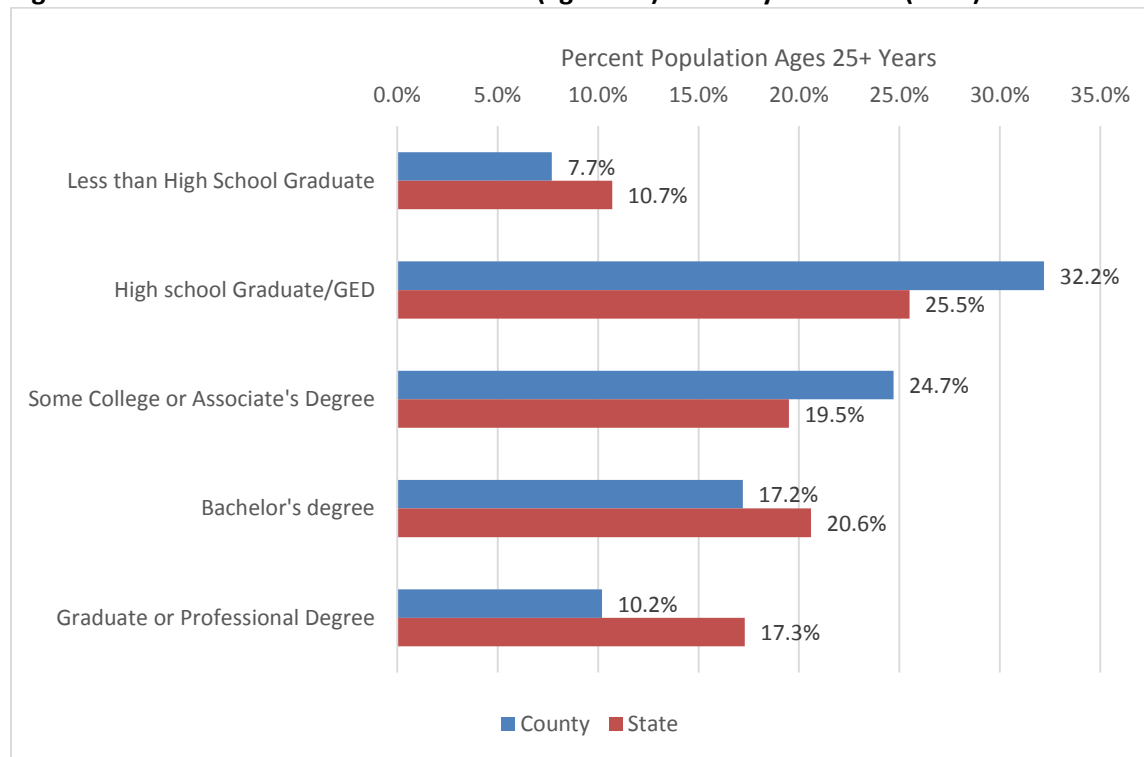


Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Maryland Department of Planning

Educational Attainment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's latest American Community Survey (2015) on educational attainment, young adult (ages 18 to 24) and adult (ages 25+) residents of the County had relatively high levels of education. As illustrated in **Figure 9**, the majority (over 92%) of County adults over the age of 25 years have a high school education or greater, with 27.4% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. Statewide, a higher percentage of adults (37.9%) hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

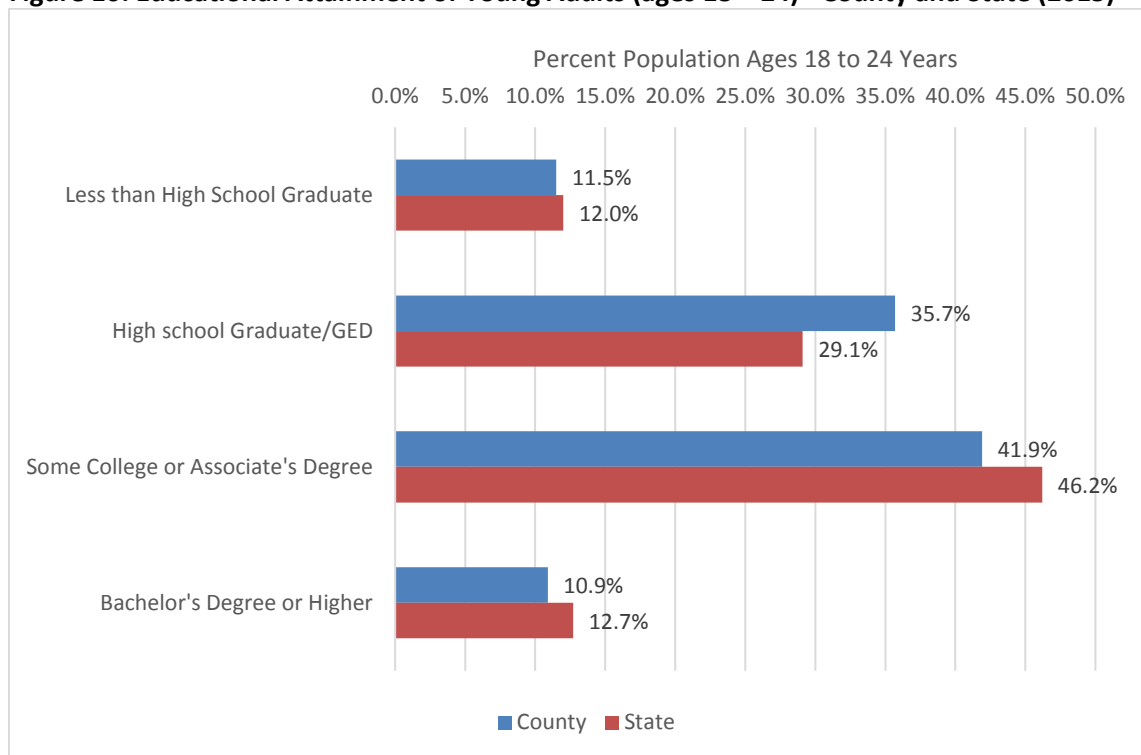
Figure 9: Educational Attainment of Adults (ages 25+) – County and State (2015)



Source: American Community Survey

As illustrated in **Figure 10**, young adults (ages 18-24 years) in Charles County and State of Maryland are also generally well educated. Nearly 90% of 18 to 24 year olds had earned a high school education or higher, with over 40% earning an associate's degree or receiving some college level education.

Figure 10: Educational Attainment of Young Adults (ages 18 – 24) - County and State (2015)

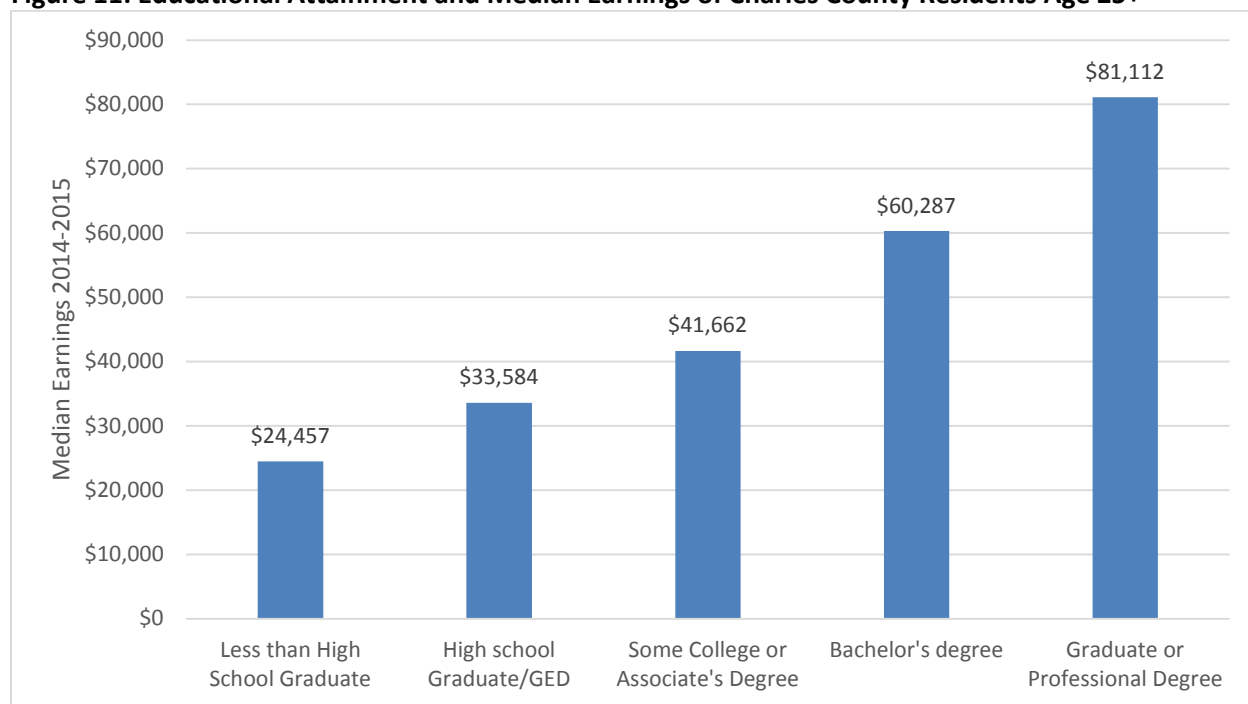


Source: American Community Survey

According to a Census study, education levels had more effect on earnings over a 40-year span in the workforce than any other demographic factor, such as gender, race, and ethnic origin.¹ This link between education and earnings appears clearly illustrated in Charles County. As **Figure 11** shows, Charles County residents (age 25+) with higher levels of education had higher annual incomes than those with lower levels of education. In fact, residents with a Bachelor's degree had annual earnings that were over double that of residents who did not graduate high school; those with graduate or professional degrees earned over three times as much as those without high school educations.

¹ Tiffany Julian and Robert Kominski, "Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates" American Community Survey Reports, US Census Bureau, <http://www.Census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acs-14.pdf>, September 2011.

Figure 11: Educational Attainment and Median Earnings of Charles County Residents Age 25+

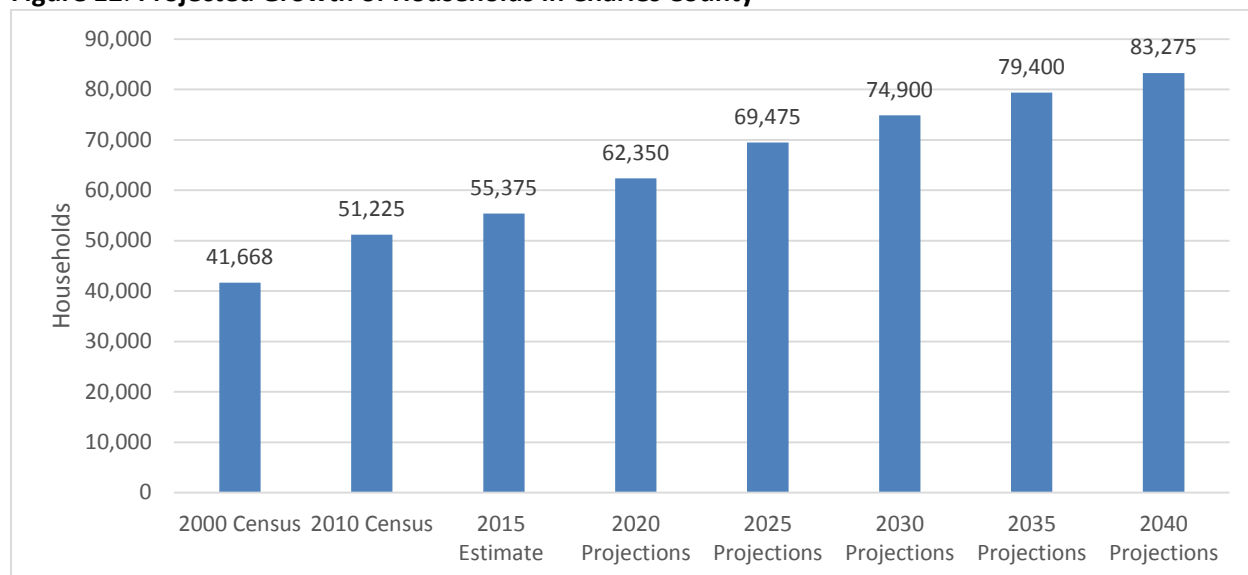


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Household Information

As reflected in **Figure 12**, the total number of households in the County increased by nearly 10,000 from 2000 to 2010. The Maryland Department of Planning estimated that from 2010 to 2015, the number of households in Charles County increased by an additional 4,150 households. Coinciding with projected population growth, the number of households in the County is also predicted to continue to rise.

Figure 12: Projected Growth of Households in Charles County

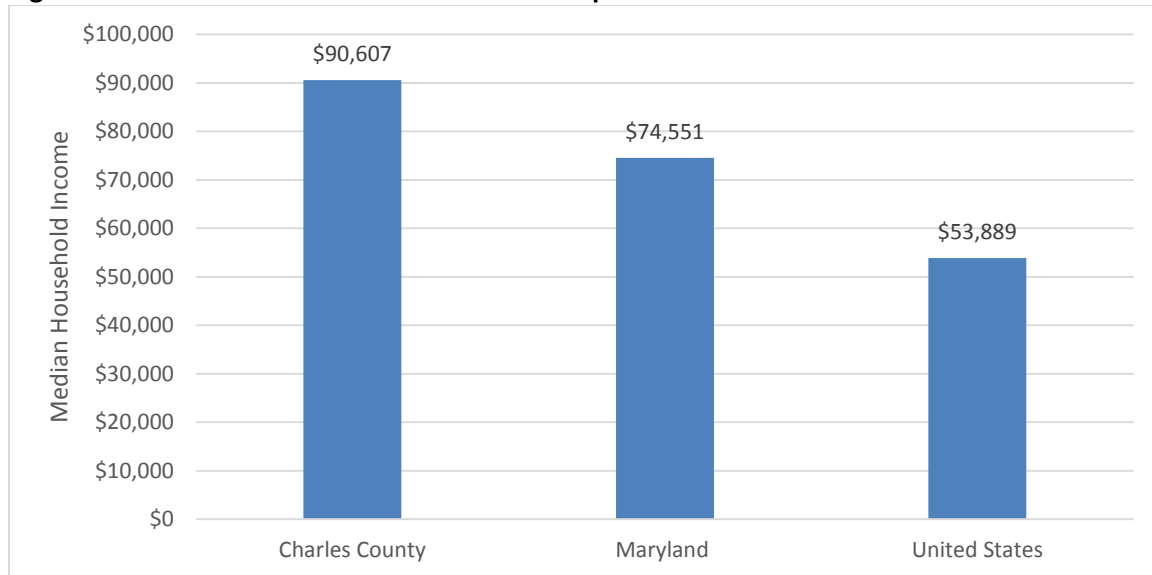


Source: Maryland Department of Planning

Household Income

The most current data (2015) from the Maryland Department of Planning and U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, illustrated in **Figure 13**, indicated that the median household income in Charles County was higher than that of the median household in Maryland and the United States.

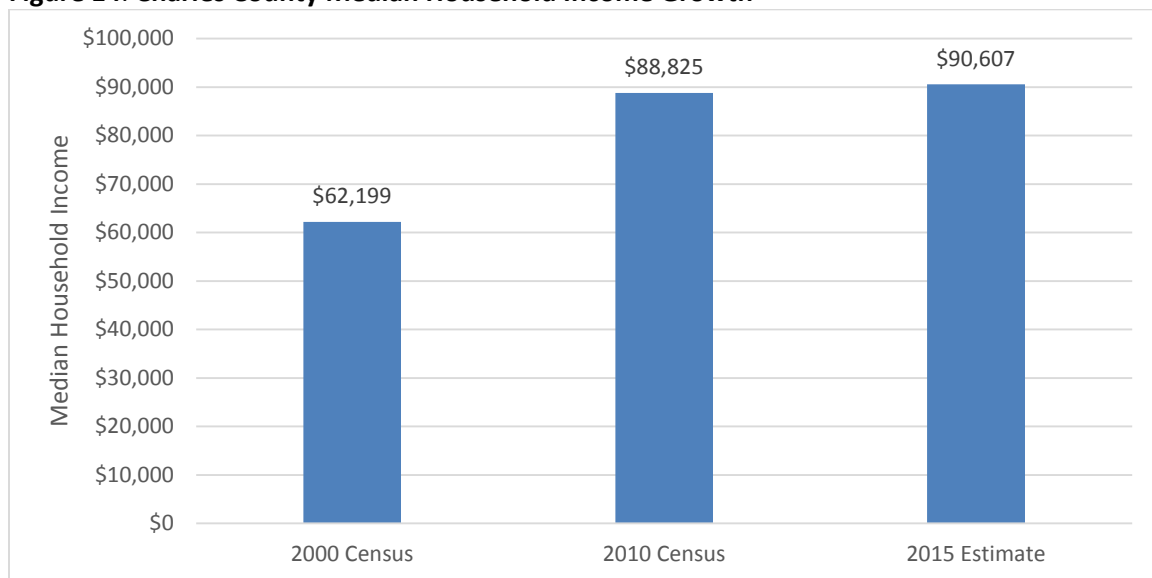
Figure 13: 2015 Median Household Income Comparison



Source: Maryland Department of Planning and American Community Survey

As **Figure 14** illustrates, the median household income in Charles County grew significantly from 2000 to 2010. From 2010 to 2015 median household income continued to increase, but at a much less rapid pace. Of note is the correlation between strong growth of household income, number of households, and population during the period from 2000 to 2010.

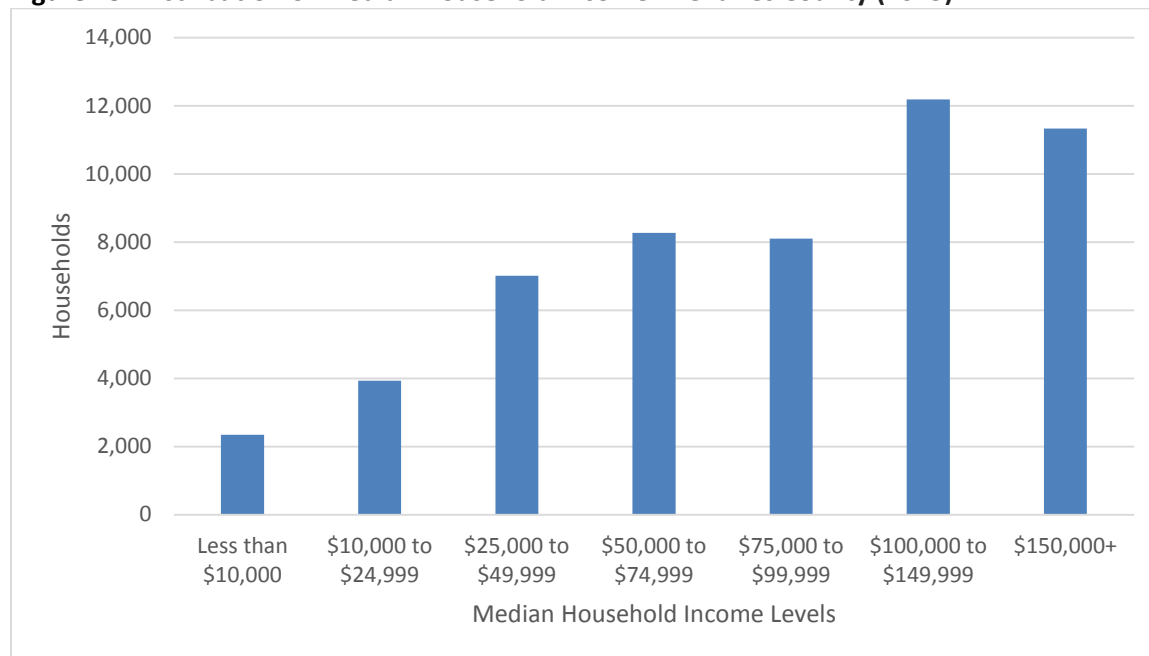
Figure 14: Charles County Median Household Income Growth



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey

Figure 15 illustrates the distribution of median household income in Charles County in 2015.

Figure 15: Distribution of Median Household Income in Charles County (2015)

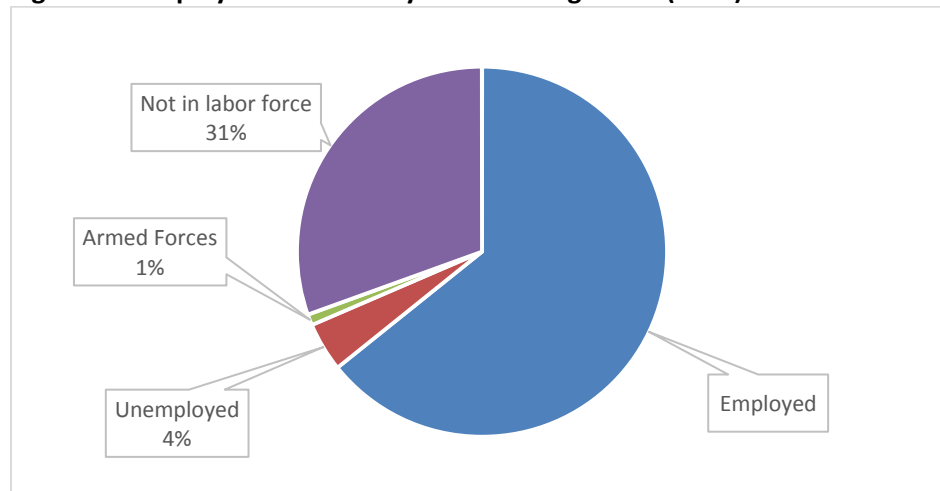


Source: American Community Survey

Employment

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2015) estimated the eligible working population of Charles County (those ages 16+) to be 119,276. Of these potential workers, 82,887 were in the labor force, with most (81,735) within the civilian labor force, and an additional 1,142 were estimated to be in military positions. A total of 36,399 residents over the age of 16 were not in the labor force, while 76,622 were listed as employed, and 5,113 residents were listed as unemployed. **Figure 16** represents the distribution of the labor force in Charles County.

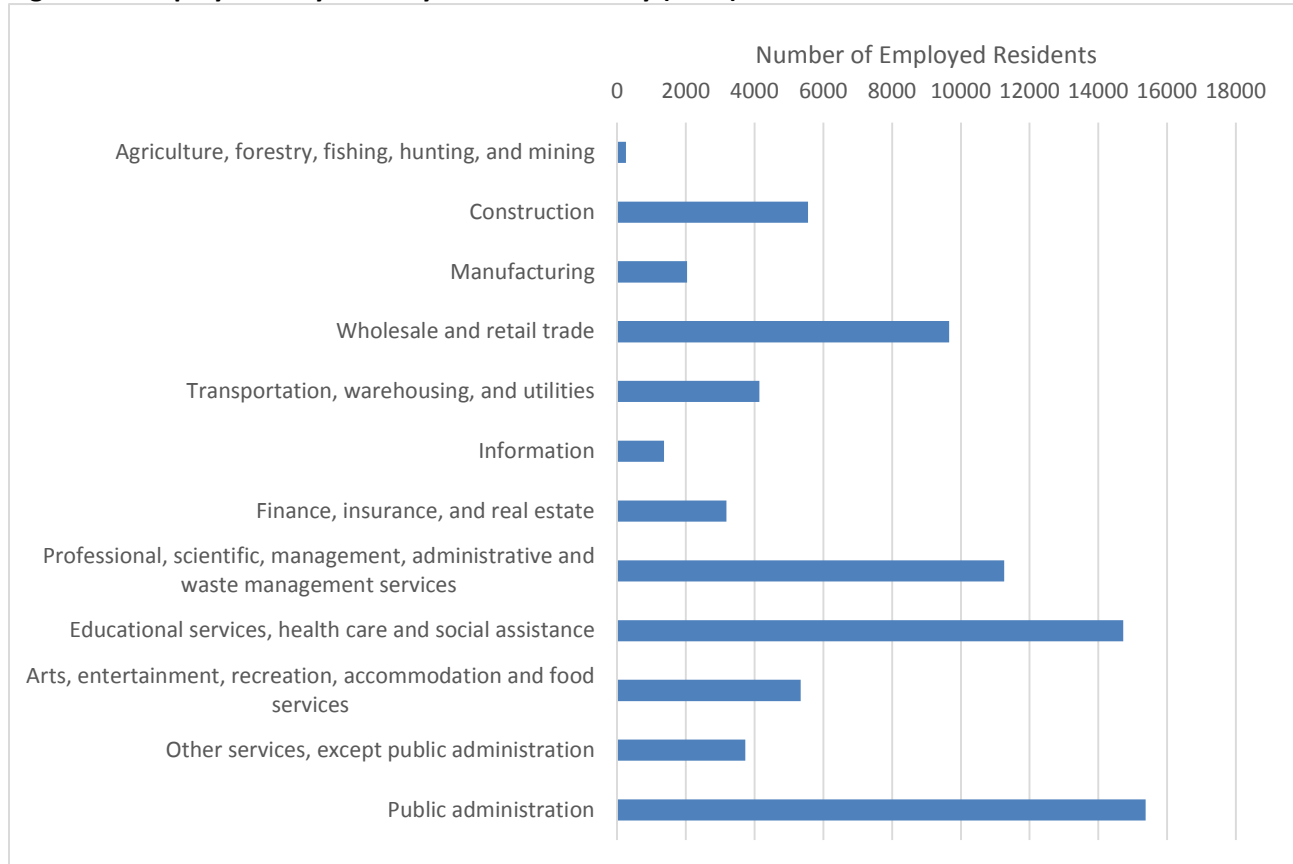
Figure 16: Employment of County Residents Ages 16+ (2015)



Source: American Community Survey

In 2015, the majority of working residents (age 16+) in Charles County were employed in public administration, educational services, and health care and social assistance industries as shown in **Figure 17**.

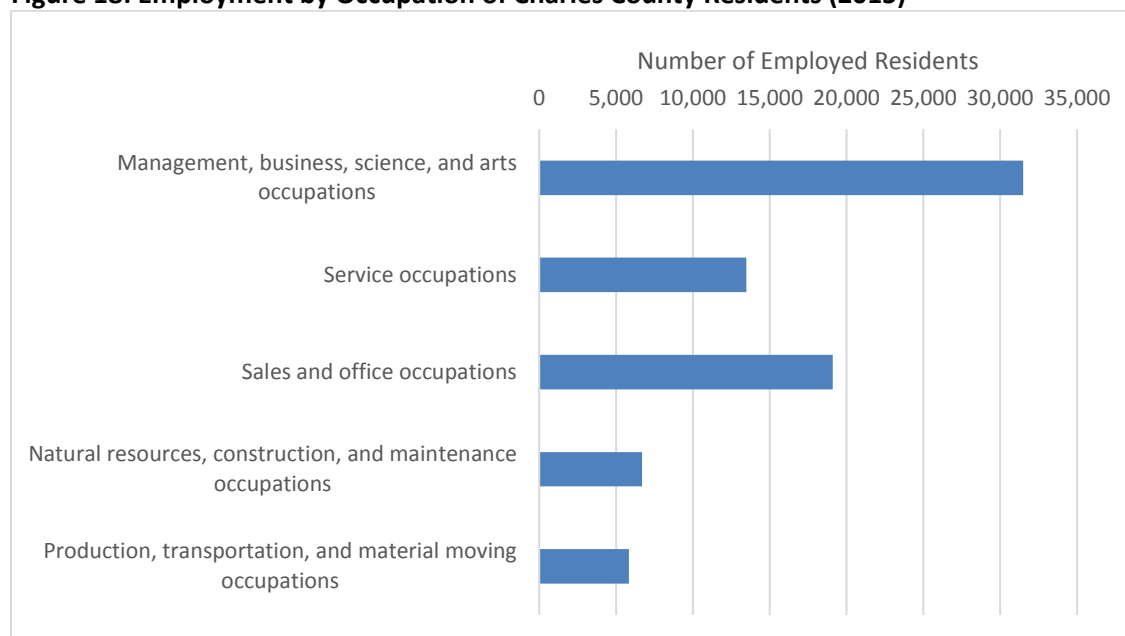
Figure 17: Employment by Industry in Charles County (2015)



Source: American Community Survey

Employment by occupation in 2015 of working residents of the County is illustrated in **Figure 18**. At the time, the majority of working residents were in management, business, and science and arts occupations. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that many of the County's working residents were employed in managerial, business, scientific, or artistic occupations in the education, health care and social services industries, or public administration industries.

Figure 18: Employment by Occupation of Charles County Residents (2015)



Source: American Community Survey

Health Ranking

The United Health Foundation’s “America’s Health Rankings” and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s “County Health Rankings and Roadmaps” provide annual data on the general health of national, state, and county populations. The health rankings generally represent how healthy the population of a defined area can be perceived based on “how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive,” coupled with ranking factors including healthy behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors.²

The United Health Foundation’s “America’s Health Rankings 2015 Annual Report” ranked Maryland as the 18th healthiest state nationally. According to the Foundation, Maryland’s health ranking strengths include ready availability of primary care physicians, low prevalence of smoking, and low percentage of children in poverty. Health challenges faced by the state include high levels of air pollution, a high violent crime rate, and large disparity in health status by education level. The 2016 “County Health Rankings and Roadmaps” ranked Charles County 13th of Maryland’s 23 counties and City of Baltimore in terms of health outcomes, a measure that weighs the length and quality of life of residents, and 12th for health factors, a measure that considers the population’s health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment.

² University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps 2016*, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

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Appendix B: Park and Recreation Influencing Trends

The provision of public parks and recreation services can be influenced by a wide variety of trends, including the desires of different age groups, community values, and popularity of a variety of recreational activities and amenities. Within this section of the plan, a number of local and national trends are reviewed that should be considered by the County when determining where to allocate resources toward the provision of parks, recreational facilities, and recreational programming for its residents and visitors.

This Report is generally organized into two sections:

1. Esri Business Solution models and estimates of local household participation in, and spending on, recreational, sports, fitness, and leisure activities. Opportunities for participation in many of the activities analyzed are provided by Charles County's system of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces.
2. Overview of key national recreation trends pertinent to the provision of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces relevant to the population of Charles County.

Household Recreation Participation and Spending Estimates

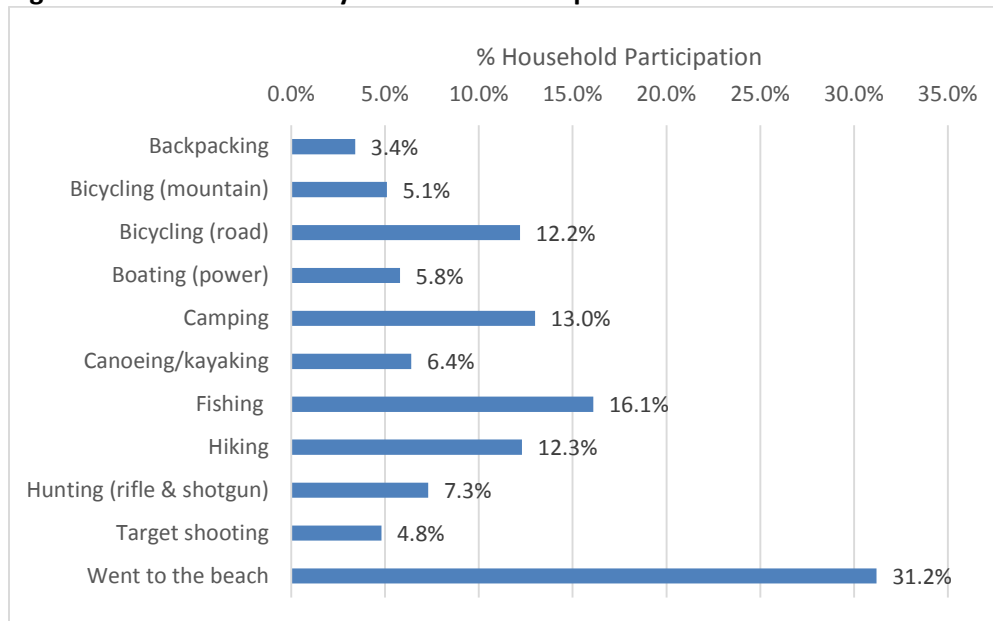
Esri Business Analyst model estimates of Charles County household participation rates in certain recreation, fitness, and leisure activities, as well as estimated household spending on fees, equipment, and other typical costs associated with participation. The models and resulting estimates utilize a combination of information from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other data sources that gauge national tendencies to participate and spend on these activities and weighs it against Esri's current (December 2016) local demographic characteristics including population, age, and household income, to yield an estimate of household participation and spending on recreation, fitness and leisure activities in Charles County during the previous 12 months.

Note that Esri's current demographic estimates (December 2016) for Charles County differ slightly than the population figures referred to throughout the remainder of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. The remainder of this Plan refers primarily to current data provided by the Maryland Department of Planning (2015). Although this difference exists, it does not skew the overall results of the household recreation and spending analysis. As a basis of comparison, Esri's December 2016 data estimates the total population of Charles County to be 160,585, whereas the 2015 County population was estimated to be 156,118 by the Maryland Department of Planning.

Estimated Household Participation

According to Esri Business Analyst, Charles County residents participated in a variety of recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities in past year. The activities reviewed are representative of those that are often offered through parks and recreation facilities, and programs throughout the Country. **Figures 19 – 21** review the Esri estimated participation of the County's households in outdoor recreation activities, team and individual sports, fitness activities, and leisure activities. **Figures 22 – 23** review the estimated spending of County households through participation in recreation, fitness, and leisure activities.

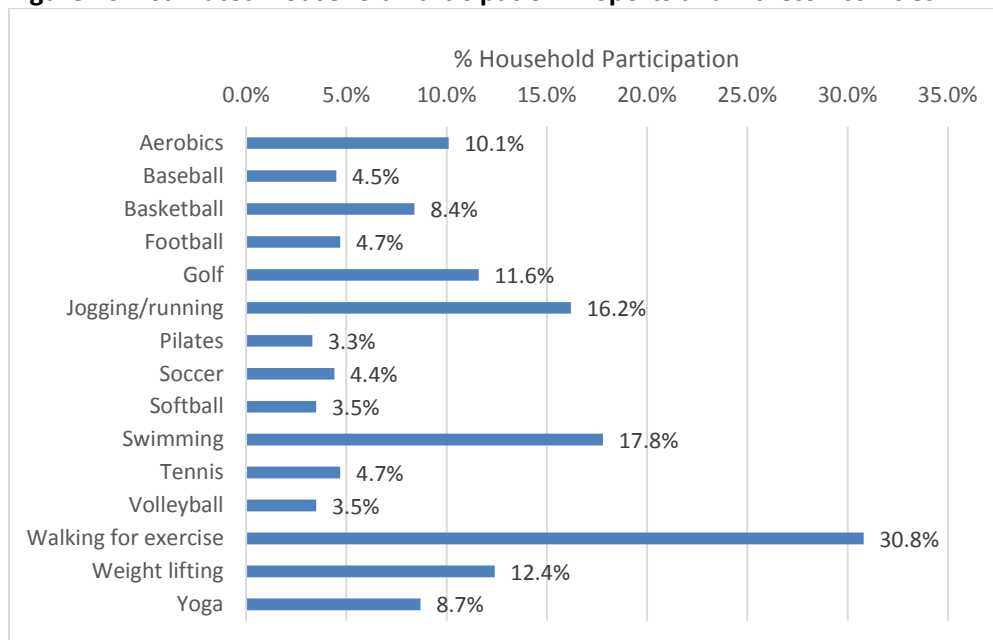
Figure 19: Estimated County Household Participation in Outdoor Activities



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential, December 2016

As illustrated in **Figure 19**, nearly one third of County households included members that were likely to go to the beach. Additionally, over 12% of households were estimated to have participated in fishing, camping, hiking, and on-road bicycling.

Figure 20: Estimated Household Participation in Sports and Fitness Activities



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential, December 2016

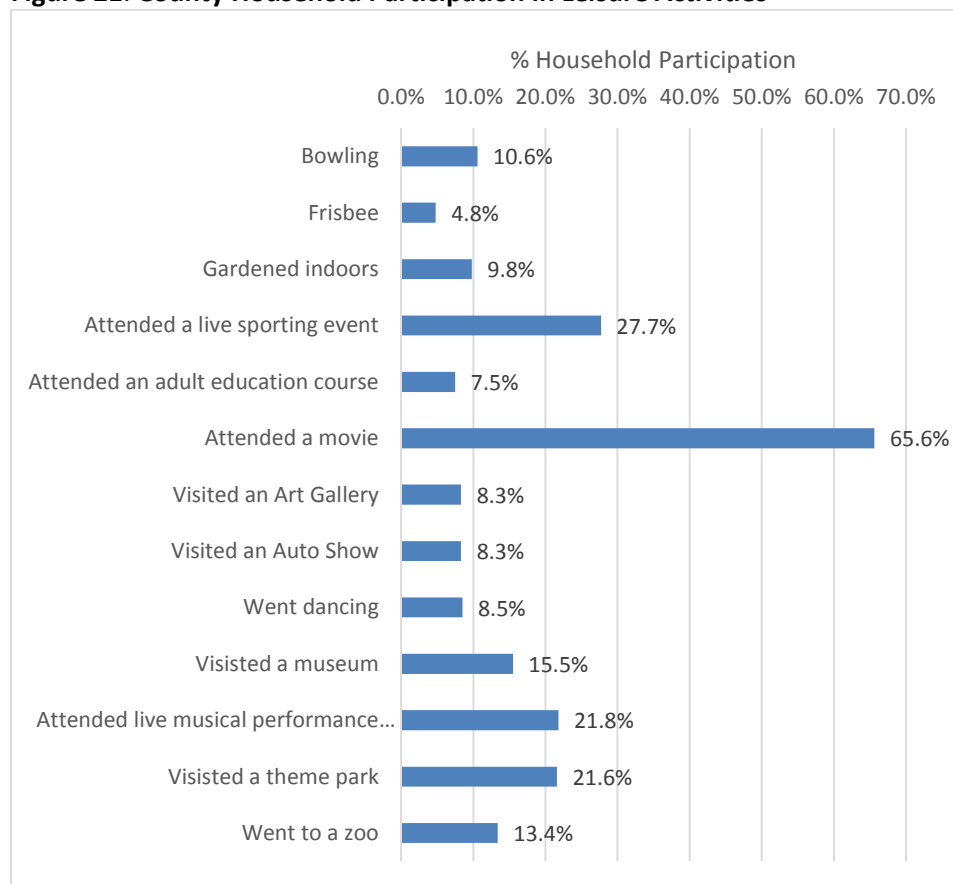
As illustrated in **Figure 20**, fewer households in Charles County included members that participated in team sports, and individual sports and fitness activities, than in outdoor sports and recreation activities. Basketball was estimated to be the most heavily practiced team sport, with over 8% of households with members likely to have participated.

47% of County households were estimated to have participated in jogging, running, and walking for exercise in 2016.

Individual fitness activities were estimated to be highly popular, with over 10% of households estimated to have participated in either walking for exercise, swimming, jogging/running, weight lifting, or aerobics. Although Esri estimates that fewer households had members that participated in team sports, youth participation in organized team sports is known to be high in the County.

Of note, combined, nearly half of County households participated in jogging, running, and walking for exercise. These healthy activities have generally few restrictions, or costs for individual participation. With such a high estimated rate of participation, the provision of trails, paths, and facilities to support public participation should be a focus area for County recreation infrastructure and service delivery.

Figure 21: County Household Participation in Leisure Activities



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential, November 2016

Roughly 2/3 of County households included members that attended a movie at least once in the past year. As illustrated in **Figure 21**, other popular leisure activities enjoyed by Charles County households included attending live sporting events, visiting a live musical performance, theme park, or museum.

Estimated Household Spending on Participation in Recreation Activities

Local participation in recreation, fitness, and leisure activities positively contributes to public health, community wellness, and the local economy. According to Esri, over the past 12 months, Charles County households collectively spent an estimated \$72.4 million on fees,

\$72.4 million
Estimated Charles County Household
Spending on recreation in 2016.

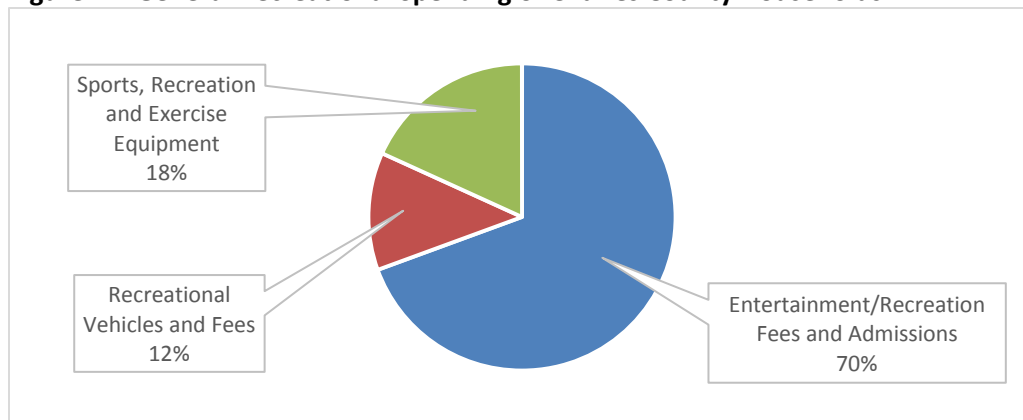
equipment, and other costs typically associated with participation in recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities. **Table 7** provides a summary of spending per County household, as well as the estimated total annual spending on recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. As illustrated in **Figure 22**, the majority of this spending was on fees and admission to entertainment and recreation activities. A detailed breakdown of estimated household spending is noted below in **Table 8**.

Table 7: Estimated County Household 2016 Recreation Spending Summary

	Spending per Household	Total Spending - All Households
Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions	\$899	\$50,306,785
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	\$160	\$8,983,622
Sports, Recreation, and Exercise Equipment	\$236	\$13,185,666
Total	\$1,295	\$72,476,073

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures, December 2016

Figure 22: General Recreational Spending of Charles County Households



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures, December 2016

Table 8: County Household Spending on Recreation, Fitness, and Leisure Activities

	Spending per Household	Total Spending - All Households
Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions	\$899	\$50,306,785
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	\$80	\$4,505,577
Tickets to Movies/Museums/Parks	\$98	\$5,490,256
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	\$80	\$4,468,908
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	\$141	\$7,892,770
Fees for Recreational Lessons	\$204	\$11,400,117
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Civic Clubs	\$296	\$16,549,154
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	\$160	\$8,983,622
Docking and Landing Fees for Boats and Planes	\$12	\$661,347
Camp Fees	\$57	\$3,174,073
Payments on Boats/Trailers/Campers/RVs	\$68	\$3,812,842
Rental of RVs or Boats	\$24	\$1,335,359
Sports, Recreation and Exercise Equipment	\$236	\$13,185,666
Exercise Equipment and Gear, Game Tables	\$76	\$4,263,040
Bicycles	\$39	\$2,171,794
Camping Equipment	\$22	\$1,221,843
Hunting and Fishing Equipment	\$65	\$3,639,272
Winter Sports Equipment	\$8	\$441,287
Water Sports Equipment	\$9	\$481,184
Other Sports Equipment	\$13	\$700,147
Rental/Repair of Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	\$5	\$267,097

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures, December 2016

National Recreation Trends of Relevance to Charles County

Demographic Trends Influencing Public Recreation

Three major age groups, the Baby Boomers, Millennials, and Generation Z, are having significant impacts in the planning and provision of parks and recreation services nationwide. In 2016, approximately 65.9% of the residents of Charles County fell into one of these age groupings. Roughly 19.8% of the population were members of Generation Z, 26.7% were Millennials, and 19.4% were Baby Boomers.

Adults – Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in “Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers.”³ They are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans, and are estimated to have included over 30,000 Charles County residents in 2016. In 2011, this influential population began its transition out of the workforce. In the July 2012 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine, published by NRPA, Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University at Chico contributed an article titled “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today.” In it, she indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America, with Boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39% of the nation’s population.⁴ As Baby Boomers enter retirement, they are looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults.

In the leisure profession, this generation’s devotion to exercise and fitness is an example of its influence on society. When Boomers entered elementary school, President Kennedy initiated the President’s Council on Physical Fitness; making physical education a key component of public education. As Boomers matured and moved into the workplace, they took their desire for exercise and fitness with them. Now, as the oldest Boomers are nearing 70, park and recreation professionals are faced with new approaches to provide both passive and active programming for older adults. Boomers are second only to Generation Y/Millennials in participation in fitness and outdoor sports.⁵

Jeffrey Ziegler, a past president of the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association identified “Boomer Basics” in his article, “Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in their 60s?”⁶ Highlights are summarized below.

- *Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard.* They have always been fixated with all things youthful. Boomers typically respond that they feel 10 years younger than their actual age. Their nostalgic mindset keeps Boomers returning to the sights and sounds of their 1960s youth culture. Swimming pools have become less of a social setting and much more of an extension of Boomers’ health and wellness program. Because Boomers in general have a high education, level they will likely continue to pursue education as adults and into retirement.
- *Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to provide opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports.* When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes will be important. Recreation trends will shift from games and activities that Boomers associate with senior citizens. Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because boomers relate these activities with old age.

³ Linda Cochran, Anne Roshchadl, and Jodi Rudick, “Leisure Programming For Baby Boomers,” *Human Kinetics*, 2009.

⁴ Emilyn Sheffield, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today,” *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.

⁵ Physical Activity Council, 2012 Participation Report, 2012.

⁶ Jeffry Ziegler, “Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?” *Parks and Recreation*, October 2002.

- *Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means.* Parks and recreation agencies that do not plan for Boomers carrying on in retirement with the same hectic pace they have lived during their years in employment will be left behind. Things to consider when planning for the demographic shift:
 - Boomer characteristics
 - What drives Boomers?
 - Marketing to Boomers
 - Arts and entertainment
 - Passive and active fitness trends
 - Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
 - Travel programs

Adult – The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation are generally considered those born between about 1980 and 1999, and in April 2016, the Pew Research Center reported that this generation had surpassed the Baby Boomers as the nation's most populous age group.⁷ Millennials were estimated to be the most populous age cohort in Charles County in 2016, and included over 41,000, or 26.7% of the population. As this group is the largest age cohort in the County, Millennials are influential, and having an understanding of some of their general characteristics can help guide decision making in the provision of parks and recreation services to this significant segment of the local population.

In their book, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, authors William Strauss and Neil Howe identify the following seven characteristics of the Millennials:⁸

1. Special: Used to receiving rewards just for participating, Millennials are raised to feel special.
2. Sheltered: Millennials lead structured lives filled with rules and regulations. Less accustomed to unstructured play than previous generations and apprehensive of the outdoors, they spend most of their time indoors, leaving home primarily to socialize with friends and families.
3. Team Oriented: This group has a "powerful instinct for community" and "places a high value on teamwork and belonging."
4. Technically savvy: Upbeat and with a can-do attitude, this generation is "more optimistic and tech-savvy than its elders."
5. Pressured: Millennials feel "pressured to achieve and pressured to behave." They have been "pushed to study hard and avoid personal risk."
6. Achieving: This generation is expected to do great things, and they may be the next "great" generation.
7. Conventional (and diverse): Millennials are respectful of authority and civic minded. Respectful of cultural differences because they are ethnically diverse, they also value good conduct and tend to have a "standardized appearance."

⁷ Richard Fry, "Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation," *Pew Research Center Fact Tank*, April 25, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/>, accessed May 2015

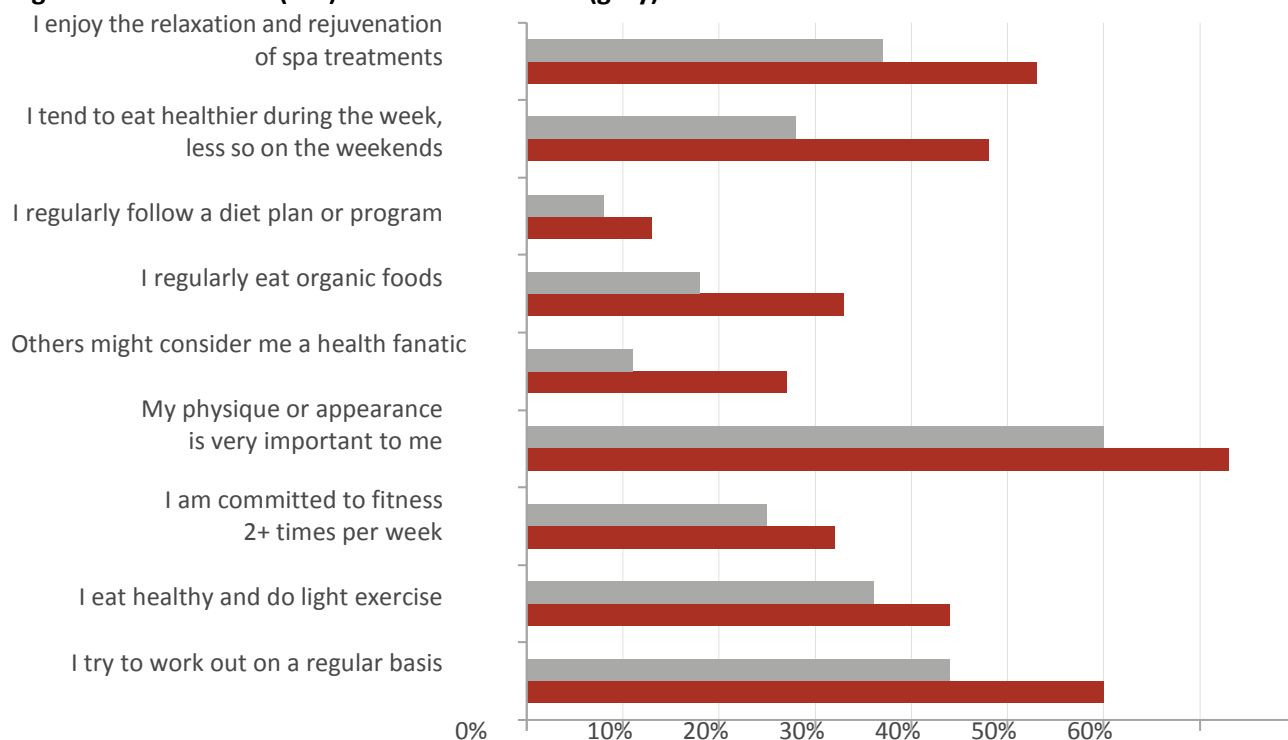
⁸ William Strauss and Neil Howe, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, Vintage: New York, New York, 2000.

In a 2011 study of the Millennial Generation,⁹ Barkley Advertising Agency made the following observations about Millennials and health/fitness:

- Sixty percent (60%) of Millennials say they try to work out on a regular basis. Twenty-six percent (26%) consider themselves health fanatics.
- Much of this focus on health is really due to vanity and/or the desire to impress others — 73% exercise to enhance their physical appearance.
- Millennials are also fans of relaxation and rejuvenation, as 54% regularly treat themselves to spa services.
- Despite their commitment to health, Millennials stray from their healthy diets on weekends. There's a noticeable difference between their intent to work out regularly and the amount of exercise that they actually accomplish.

Figure 23 illustrates contrasts between Millennials and Non-Millennials regarding a number of health and fitness topics.¹⁰

Figure 23: Millennials (red) Vs. Non-Millennials (grey) on Health and Fitness



Source: *American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation*

⁹ American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, <https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf>, accessed May 2015

¹⁰ American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, <https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf>, accessed May 2015

As Millennials tend to be more tech-savvy, socially conscious, achievement-driven age group with more flexible ideas about balancing wealth, work, and play. They generally prefer different park amenities and recreational programs than their counterparts in the Baby Boomer generation. Engagement with this generation should be considered in parks and recreation planning. In an April 2015 posting to the National Parks and Recreation Association's official blog, *Open Space*, Scott Hornick, CEO of Adventure Solutions suggests the following 7 things to consider to make your parks Millennial friendly:¹¹

1. Group activities are appealing.
2. Wireless internet/Wi-Fi access is a must – being connected digitally is a Millennial status-quo, and sharing experiences in real time is something Millennials enjoying doing.
3. Having many different experiences is important – Millennials tend to participate in a broad range of activities.
4. Convenience and comfort are sought out.
5. Competition is important, and Millennials enjoy winning, recognition, and earning rewards.
6. Facilities that promote physical activity, such as trails and sports fields, and activities like adventure races are appealing.
7. Many Millennials own dogs and want places in which they can recreate with them.

In addition to being health conscious, Millennials often look for local and relatively inexpensive ways to experience the outdoors close to home; on trails, bike paths, and in community parks.¹² They, along with the Baby Boomer generation, highly value walkability, and in a 2014 study by the American Planning Association, two-thirds noted that improving walkability in a community is directly related to strengthening the local economy. The study also noted that 46% of Millennials, and Baby Boomers, place a high priority on having sidewalks, hiking trails, bike paths, and fitness choices available to them in their community. In fact, these community features were viewed by study respondents to be of higher preference than a great school system, vibrant centers of entertainment and culture, and affordable and convenient transportation choices.¹³

Youth – Generation Z

In her article, Emily Sheffield also identified that the proportion of youth is smaller than in the past, but still essential to our future. As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population. Nationwide, nearly half of the youth population is ethnically diverse, and 25% is Hispanic. In Charles County, about 19.8% of the population (30,922 residents) was under the age of 19 in 2016.

¹¹ Scott Hornick, "7 Ways to Make Your Park More Millennial Friendly," *Parks and Recreation Open Space Blog*, August 19, 2015, <http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-ways-to-make-your-parks-millennial-friendly>, accessed May 2016

¹² "Sneakernomics: How The 'Outdoor' Industry Became The 'Outside' Industry," *Forbes*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2015/09/21/sneakernomics-how-the-outdoor-industry-became-the-outside-industry/2/#50958385e34d>, accessed May 2016

¹³ American Planning Association, "Investing in Place: Two generation's view on the future of communities: millennials, boomers, and new directions for planning and economic development," <https://www.planning.org/policy/polls/investing>, accessed May 2015

Characteristics cited for Generation Z, the youth of today, include:¹⁴

- The most obvious characteristic for Generation Z is the pervasive use of technology.
- Generation Z members live their lives online, and they love sharing both the intimate and mundane details of life.
- They tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.
- Generation Zers tend to be independent. They do not wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions.

With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University noted that the prevalence of obesity in Generation Z (which they describe as individuals born since the year 2000) is triple that of Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979). It suggests that due to increased use of technology, Generation Z spends more time indoors, is less physically active, and more obese compared to previous generations. The researchers noted that Generation Z seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation. This is the most competent generation from a technological standpoint, but Generation Zers tend to fear, and often struggle with, some basic physical activities and sports.

Multiculturalism

The United States is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In May 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that non-white babies now account for the majority of births in the United States. "This is an important tipping point," noted William H. Frey,¹⁵ senior demographer at the Brookings Institution, describing the shift as a, "transformation from a mostly white Baby Boomer culture to the more globalized multi-ethnic country that we are becoming." Cultural and ethnic diversity adds unique character to communities expressed through distinct neighborhoods, multicultural learning environments, and restaurants, places of worship, museums, and nightlife.¹⁶

Charles County's 2016 estimated population was predominantly Caucasian (47%), and 45% were African American, which combined included 92% of the population. The remaining 4.4% of the population was comprised of other racial and ethnic groups. The racial and ethnic composition of the County is projected to remain stable through 2021.

As the recreation agencies continue to provide services within a more diverse society, race and ethnicity in the County will become increasingly important factors in determining programming needs, and means of service delivery. More than ever, recreation professionals will be expected to work with, and have significant knowledge and understanding of individuals from many cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

¹⁴ Alexandra Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z," *New York Times*, March 28, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html>, accessed May 2016

¹⁵ Adam Serwer, "The End of White America," *Mother Jones*, <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/05/end-white-america>, May 17, 2012.

¹⁶ Baldwin Ellis, "The Effects of Culture & Diversity on America," http://www.ehow.com/facts_5512569_effects-culture-diversity-america.html, accessed on Sept. 20, 2012.

- **Outdoor recreation participation varies by ethnicity:** Participation in outdoor activities is generally higher among Caucasians than any other ethnicity, and lowest among African Americans in nearly all age groups.
- **Lack of interest is a major reason for lack of participation in recreational activities:** When asked why they did not participate in outdoor activities more often, the number one reason given by people of all ethnicities and races was because they were not interested.
- **Most popular outdoor activities:** Walking, biking, running, fishing, and camping were the most popular outdoor activities for all Americans, with each ethnic/racial group participating to varying degrees.

General Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups (Self-Identifying):

Nationwide participation in outdoor sports by youths and young adults, ages 6 – 24, was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among Asian and Pacific Islanders, according to the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report.”¹⁷ The Report found that within this age range, 71% of Caucasians, 12% of Hispanics, 8% of African Americans, 7% of Asians/Pacific Islanders, and 2% of those identifying their race as “other,” participated in some form of outdoor recreation in 2014. The earlier 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” included a robust study of recreational preference among ethnic populations. Information from this report, as well as the updated 2016 Report, are referenced throughout this section.

Facilities

According to *Recreation Management* magazine’s 2015 “State of the Industry Report,”¹⁸ national trends show an increased user-base of recreation facilities (private and public). Additionally, parks and recreation providers indicated that the average age of their community recreation facilities is 26.4 years. To meet the growing demand for recreational facilities, a majority of the parks and recreation providers who responded to the survey (72.6%) reported that they plan to build new facilities or renovate and/or expand existing facilities over the next three years. Additionally, the 2015 “State of the Industry Report” notes that the average planned capital improvement budget for parks and recreation departments increased slightly from an average of \$3,795,000 in 2014 to an average of \$3,880,000 in 2015. The Report further indicated that the top 10 park features planned for construction in the near future were likely to include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Splash play areas | 6. Bike trails |
| 2. Playgrounds | 7. Park restroom structures |
| 3. Dog parks | 8. Park structures such as shelters and gazebos |
| 4. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment | 9. Synthetic turf sports fields |
| 5. Hiking and walking trails | 10. Wi-Fi services |

¹⁷ Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016*, <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2016Topline.pdf>, accessed May 2016

¹⁸ Emily Tipping, “2015 State of the Industry Report, State of the Managed Recreation Industry,” *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

An additional national trend of note is toward the construction of “one-stop” indoor recreation facilities to serve all age groups. These facilities are typically large, multipurpose regional centers that have been observed to help increase operational cost recovery, promote user retention, and encourage cross-use. Parks and recreation agencies across the United States are generally working toward increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Providing multiuse space and flexibility in facilities versus single, specialized spaces is a trend, offering programming opportunities as well as free-play opportunities. “One-stop” facilities often attract young families, teens, and adults of all ages.

Aquatics/Water Recreation Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nationwide among recreational activities in terms of participation in 2014.¹⁹ Nationally, there is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for inactive individuals in all age groups, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) 2016 “Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report,” representing a significant opportunity to engage inactive populations.

Aquatic amenities such as splash pads, shallow spray pools, and interactive fountains are becoming increasingly popular attractions in the summer, and if designed for such, can be converted into ice rinks for the winter. These features can also be designed to be ADA-compliant, and are often cheaper alternatives to build and maintain than community swimming pools. Trends in the architectural design for splash parks can be found in *Recreation Management* magazine articles in 2014 and 2015.²⁰

The Outdoor Foundation’s 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” provided nationwide trends for various outdoor activities, including a number of water-based recreational activities noted below in **Table 9**. Among water recreation activities, stand-up paddling had the largest increase in participation (25.7%), followed by several varieties of the kayaking experience: kayak fishing (17.4% increase), and whitewater kayaking (10.3% increase). Fly fishing participation went up while other fishing activities went down in the same time period. Participation in surfing declined slightly in 2015, down by 2.2% overall. Sailing participation increased somewhat, while rafting and wakeboarding participation went down.²¹

¹⁹ National Sporting Goods Association, “2014 Participation – Ranked by Total,”

²⁰ Dawn Klingensmith “Make a splash: Spraygrounds Get (Even More) Creative,” *Recreation Management*, April 2014 (and April 2015 updates), http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201404fe01

²¹ Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016

Table 9: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	3 Year Average Change
Boardsailing/windsurfing	1,151	1,593	1,324	1,562	1,766	4.7%
Canoeing	9,787	9,839	10,153	10,044	10,236	1.3%
Fishing (fly)	5,683	6,012	5,878	5,842	6,089	0.5%
Fishing (freshwater/other)	38,868	39,135	37,796	37,821	37,682	-1.2%
Fishing (Saltwater)	11,983	12,017	11,790	11,817	11,975	-0.1%
Kayak fishing	1,201	1,409	1,798	2,074	2,265	17.4%
Kayaking (recreational)	8,229	8,144	8,716	8,855	9,499	5.3%
Kayaking (sea touring)	2,029	2,499	2,694	2,912	3,079	8.0%
Kayaking (white water)	1,546	1,878	2,146	2,351	2,518	10.3%
Rafting	3,821	3,690	3,836	3,781	3,883	1.7%
Sailing	3,725	3,958	3,915	3,924	4,099	1.2%
Stand up paddle boarding	1,242	1,542	1,993	2,751	3,020	25.7%
Surfing	2,195	2,895	2,658	2,721	2,701	-2.2%
Wakeboarding	3,389	3,348	3,316	3,125	3,226	-1.2%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Dog Parks

Dog parks are increasingly popular community amenities and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. In fact, the 10 largest cities in the U.S. increased the number of dog parks in their parks system by 34% between 2005 and 2010. Dog parks not only provide safe spaces for animals to socialize and exercise; they are also places where dog owners socialize and enjoy the outdoors. They help build a sense of community and can draw potential new community members and tourists traveling with pets.²²

In 2014, the National Dog Park Association was established and focused its mission on providing informational resources for establishing and maintaining dog parks. *Recreation Management* magazine²³ suggested that dog parks can serve as a relatively low-cost way to provide an oft-visited a popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities such as water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations. Even splash pads are being designed for dog parks.

²² Joe Bush, “Tour-Legged-Friendly Parks,” *Recreation Management*, February 2, 2016.

²³ Emily Tipping, “2014 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation,” *Recreation Management*, June 2014.

Well-designed dog parks cater to users with design features for their comfort and pleasure. Some parks agencies even also offer creative programming at some dog parks for owners and their dogs.²⁴

Amenities in a well-designed dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade, and water – for dogs and people
- At least one acre of fenced-in space with adequate drainage
- Double gated entry
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags
- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas
- Custom designed splash pads or water-play feature for dogs
- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

Parks and Recreation Programming

According to *Recreation Management* magazine's 2015 "State of the Industry Report,"²⁵ the most common programs offered by parks and recreation survey respondents included: holiday events and other special events (79.6%); youth sports teams (68.9%); day camps and summer camps (64.2%); educational programs (63.8%); adult sports teams (63.4%); arts and crafts (61.6%); programs for active older adults (56.2%); fitness programs (55%); sports tournaments and races (55%); and sport training such as golf or tennis instruction (53.8%).

About one-third (35.7%) of parks and recreation respondents indicated that they are planning to add programs at their facilities over the next three years. Per the 2015 "State of the Industry Report," the 10 most common types of additional programming planned for 2015/2016 included:

1. Environmental education programs
2. Mind-body/balance programs such as yoga and tai chi
3. Fitness programs
4. Educational programs
5. Programs for active older adults
6. Teen programming
7. Holidays and special events
8. Day camps and summer camps
9. Adult sports teams
10. Water sports such as canoeing and kayaking

Fitness Programming

Fitness programming, and popularity of various activities has significantly evolved over the past 15 years. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) *Health and Fitness Journal* has conducted annual surveys since 2007 to gauge trends that would help inform the creation of standards for health and fitness programming. **Table 10** illustrates survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry in 2015. Some trends first identified in 2007 have remained popular year after year while other activities and associated programs were widely popular for short durations. For example, Zumba was a top 10 fitness trend/activity in 2012 but quickly declined in popularity. Two years later, in 2014, it failed to register in the top 20 fitness trends/activities.

²⁴ Dawn Klingensmith "Gone to the Dogs: Design and Manage an Effective Off-Leash Area," *Recreation Management*, March 2014, http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02

²⁵ Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

Body weight training appeared and high-intensity interval training are currently highly popular. Fitness programs for older adults have remained highly desirable activities for nearly a decade.²⁶

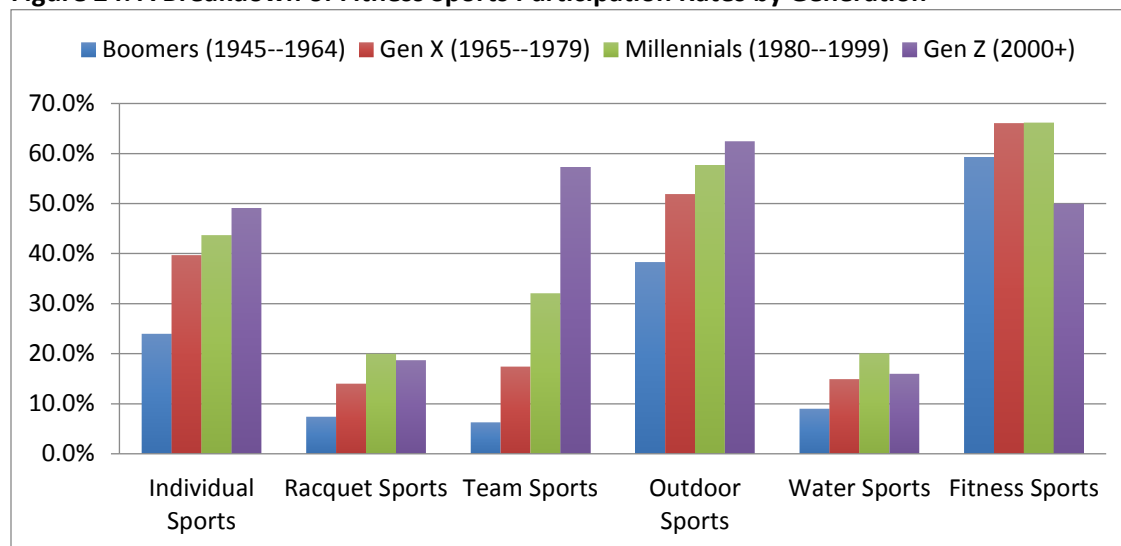
Table 10: Top 10 National Fitness Trends for 2015 Compared to 2007

2007	Trends for 2015
1. Children and obesity	1. Body weight training
2. Fitness programs for older adults	2. High-intensity interval training
3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals	3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals
4. Functional fitness	4. Strength training
5. Core training	5. Personal training
6. Strength training	6. Exercise and weight loss
7. Personal training	7. Yoga
8. Mind/body exercise	8. Fitness programs for older adults
9. Exercise and weight loss	9. Functional fitness
10. Outcome measurements	10. Group personal training

Source: American College of Sports Medicine

According to the 2015 “Participation Report” by the Physical Activity Council, over half of each generation participates in fitness sports. Team sports are generally popular with the younger, Generation Z age demographic, while water and racquet sports were popular with Millennials. Outdoor and individual sports tend to have younger participants with participation decreasing with age. **Figure 24** illustrates participation rates by generation.²⁷

Figure 24: A Breakdown of Fitness Sports Participation Rates by Generation



Source: 2015 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council

²⁶ Walter R. Thompson, “Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012,” *Health & Fitness Journal*, American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.

²⁷ 2015 Participation Report,” Physical Activity Council, 2015.

Older Adults and Senior Programming

Many older adults and seniors are choosing to maintain active lifestyles and recognize the health benefits of regular physical activities. With the large number of adults in these age cohorts, many communities have found a need to offer more programming, activities, and facilities that support the active lifestyle this generation desires. Public parks and recreation agencies are increasingly expected to be significant providers of such services and facilities. The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.²⁸ It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Through popular programs, including Silver Sneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, and water aerobics, more Americans are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

Festivals and Special Events

Festivals and other special events are often popular activities in communities that not only entertain, generate economic activity, and serve to celebrate community identity, they are also fantastic means of introducing people to the community's public parks and recreation system. Public parks and recreation agencies play a major role in planning, managing, and hosting festivals and other community programs that often serve to draw new users into their facilities. Attendants to events hosted in parks, or recreation centers, who enjoy their experience may want to return for another event or program, or simply to enjoy the park or recreation facility. Participants in these special programs can become interested in visiting other parks and recreation facilities or participating in programs.

In 2014, festivals grew in popularity as economic drivers and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the January 2014 issue of *Governing* magazine: "Municipal officials and entrepreneurs see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the host County as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive."²⁹ Examples of successful large-scale festivals include:

- South by Southwest (SXSW) – This annual music, film, and digital conference and festival in Austin, Texas, is a leading example. Launched in 1987, the festival's economic impact has grown steadily over recent years. In 2007, it netted \$95 million for Austin's economy. In 2013, the event topped \$218 million.
- Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California – This two-week cultural event draws big-name bands, music fans, and marketers, attracting 80,000 people per day.
- First County Festival in Monterey, California – Private producer, Goldenvoice, launched this smaller music event in August 2013 with marketing support from the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau, drawing on the County's history as host of the Monterey Jazz Festival. Adding carnival rides and local art, furniture and clothing vendors to the live music performances, the event drew 11,000 attendees each of its two days.

²⁸ American College of Sports Medicine, "Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015," <http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015>, accessed January 2015.

²⁹ Chad Kaydo, "Cities Create Music, Cultural Festivals to Make Money," *Governing*, January 2014, <http://www.governing.com/topics/finance/gov-cities-create-mucis-festivals.html>.

The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), and size (numbers of events). Research by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP) indicates there is evidence of local and county government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, and tourism).³⁰ There are also a growing number of smaller, more local, community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide³¹ on this topic.

Healthy Lifestyle Trends and Active Living

Active Transportation – Bicycling and Walking

In many surveys and studies on participation in recreational activities, walking, running, jogging, and cycling are nearly universally rated as the most popular activities among youths and adults. Walking, jogging, and running are often the most highly participated in recreational activity, and cycling often ranks as the second or third most popular activity. These activities are attractive as they require little equipment, or financial investment, to get started, and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities are often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity and increasing public health. The design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the Alliance for Biking and Walking's 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to our lives than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.
- Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75%, while the percentage of obese children rose 276%.
- Bicycling to work significantly reduces absenteeism due to illness. Regular bicyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.

Economic benefits of bicycling and walking include:

- Bicycling and walking projects create 8–12 jobs per \$1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per \$1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to \$11.80 in benefits can be gained for every \$1 invested in bicycling and walking.

³⁰ European Festival Research Group, <http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/activities/efrp/>, accessed October 2012.

³¹ Ben Janeczko, Trevor Mules, Brent Ritchie, "Estimating the Economic Impacts of Festivals and Events: A Research Guide," Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, 2002, <http://www.sustainabletourisonline.com/destinations-and-communities/implementation/destination-development/destination-products-and-experiences/events-festivals>, accessed October 2012.

National bicycling trends:

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

Bicycle-friendly communities have been emerging over the last 10 years. In addition to being a popular recreational activity, cycling has become a desirable, regular mode of transportation as people consider the costs and challenges of commuting by car or public transportation, their desire for better health, and concern for the environment.

The Alliance for Biking and Walking published its “Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report,”³² updating its 2012 Benchmarking Report. The Report shows that increasing bicycling and walking are goals that are clearly in the public interest. Where bicycling and walking levels are higher, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes levels are lower.

The Institute for Transportation & Development Policy published an updated Standard for Transportation Oriented Design in March 2014, with accessible performance objectives and metrics, to help municipalities, developers, and local residents design land use and built environment, “to support, facilitate, and prioritize not only the use of public transport, but the most basic modes of transport, walking, and cycling.” The TOD Standard, along with its performance objectives and scoring metrics, can be found at <https://www.itdp.org/tod-standard/>.³³

Health and Obesity

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity continues to be a serious issue in America, growing at an epidemic rate—almost tripling since 1990. Overall, more than one-third (35.7%) of adults and 17% of children in the United States are obese.³⁴ These statistics illustrate the importance of intervention and curbing of the epidemic in youth. As obesity in the United States continues to be a topic of interest for legislators and our government, there continues to be research suggesting that activity levels are stagnant among all age groups. For example, the CDC has reported that:

- Only 25% of adults and 27% of youth (grades 9-12) engage in recommended levels of physical activity.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of American adults are sedentary.
- Children nationally spend 4.5 – 8 hours daily (30-56 hours per week) in front of a screen (television, computer, or other electronic device).

³² Alliance for Biking and Walking, *2014 Benchmarking Report*, <http://www.bikewalkalliance.org/download-the-2014-benchmarking-report>, accessed January 2015

³³ Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, “TOD Standard, Version 2.1,” March 2014, <https://www.itdp.org/tod-standard/>

³⁴ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Obesity and Overweight – Facts,” <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/facts.html>, accessed on October 3, 2012.

Trails and Health

Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Trails and community pathways are a significant recreational and alternative transportation infrastructure, but are most effective in increasing public health when they are part of a system. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Trails for Health Initiative³⁵ concluded that a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community. Several groups, including American Trails have created resources explaining the many benefits of trails: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits>.

The health benefits are equally high for trails in urban neighborhoods as for those in state or national parks. A trail in the neighborhood, creating a "linear park," makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation or non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.³⁶

Walk with a Doc

Also popping up in parks around the country are "Walk with a Doc" programs. These programs encourage people to join others in a public park to learn about an important health topic, get a health assessment, e.g. blood pressure and to take a healthy walk along a scenic trail, led by a physician, cardiologist, or pediatrician. This is a great way to make the important connection between people, parks and physical and mental health. Cardiologist Dr. David Sabgir created this doctor-patient interactive program in 2004. With physicians "walking the talk," the programs are getting people out in the parks, engaging in healthy physical activity, and reversing the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, "in order to improve the health and well-being of the country."³⁷

Shade Structures – Solar Relief

Communities around the country are considering adding shade structures as well as shade trees to their parks, playgrounds, and pools, as, "a weapon against cancer and against childhood obesity,"³⁸ both to reduce future cancer risk and promote exercise among children. A 2005 study found that melanoma rates in people under 20 rose three percent a year between 1973 and 2001, possibly due to a thinning of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. It is recommended that children seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., but with so little shade available, kids have nowhere to go. Additionally, without adequate shade, many play areas are simply too hot to be inviting to children. On sunny days, the playground equipment is hot enough to scald the hands of would-be users.

³⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Guide to Community Preventive Services," <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>

³⁶ National Trails Training Partnership, "Health Community: What you should know about trail building,," <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/healthcombuild.html>, accessed May 2016

³⁷ "Does your Doctor Walk the Walk," <http://flowalking.com/2012/01/does-your-doctor-walk-the-walk/>; <http://www.walkwithadoc.org/who-we-are/walk-information/>, accessed September 13, 2012.

³⁸ Liz Szabo, "Shade: A weapon against skin cancer, childhood obesity," *USA Today*, June 30, 2011, www.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a-weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1, accessed May 2015

Trees would help provide protection, as tree leaves absorb about 95 percent of ultraviolet radiation, but they take a decade or more to grow large enough to make a difference. So, many communities are building shade structures instead. The non-profit Shade Foundation of America is a good resource for information about shade and shade structures, <http://www.shadefoundation.org>.

Natural Environments and Open Space

Parks and public lands are critical to the quality of life for all Americans, and that quality of life, for everyone, in any community, is improved by clean, green, and accessible parks and open space. Parks and open spaces serve an essential role in preserving natural resources and wildlife habitat, protecting clean water and clean air, and providing open space for current and future generations. Parks also provide an essential connection for Americans of all ages and abilities to the life-enhancing benefits of nature and the outdoors.³⁹ In 2013, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) further emphasized the critical role parks and recreation agencies play in conserving open spaces and natural resources when it included “conservation” as one of its “three pillars” or guiding themes (social equity, health and wellness, and conservation). The three pillars were created as a means encapsulating all of the areas where parks and recreation professionals make an impact into six words.⁴⁰

In addition to being stewards of public open spaces and natural resources, parks and recreation agencies are extremely well positioned within communities to engage people of all ages with nature, educate the public about the outdoors and environmental issues, coordinate stewardship projects with public, non-profit and private entities, and lead by example in land and resource conservation efforts. In defining its position on the role of parks and recreation agencies in conservation, NRPA noted the following benefits of conservation and environmental stewardship:

- Providing carbon-reducing sustainable landscapes that cleanse air and water, replenish aquifers, reduce storm water runoff, and protect wildlife habitat.
- Offering the public access to safe, affordable, and healthy ways to experience and appreciate nature.
- Contributing significantly to the economic well-being of communities through energy and resources conservation and providing many economic benefits to communities derived from outdoor recreation.

Additionally, NRPA noted the following points, and examples, to support its position that parks and recreation agencies play a major role in land and natural resource conservation:

- Outdoor recreation was estimated to have generated \$646 billion in consumer spending in 2012, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, and in 2016, the American Recreation Coalition estimated that outdoor recreation will generate more than \$650 billion in consumer spending.
- The return on investment from protecting open space for public benefit from ecosystem services of water filtration, climate change protection, and other aspects of conserving public open space is estimated to be 100 to 1, according to a study by the Gund Institute for Ecological Economies at the University of Vermont.
- The number of Denver residents in 1980 who said they would pay more to live near a greenbelt or park was 16%. The number in 1990 was 48%.

³⁹ National Parks and Recreation Association, “Role of Parks and Recreation in Conservation,” <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Position-Statements/Role-of-Parks-and-Recreation-in-Conservation>, accessed May 2016

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Beard, “Pillars of Our Community,” *Parks and Recreation*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2013/April/Pillars-of-Our-Communities>, accessed May 2016

- The estimated gross increase in residential property value resulting from proximity to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park is \$500 million to \$1 billion.
- In Pima County, Arizona, wildlife viewing in one year amounted to an estimated \$173.5 million in direct spending; \$90.7 million in salaries and wages associated with 3,196 jobs; and about \$9.9 million in state sales and fuel tax revenue, according to the Arizona Department of Fish and Game.
- Public support for land conservation and open space protection ballot measures has remained above 70 percent passage over the past decade, even during times of economic downturns and recessions.

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

There are numerous economic and health benefits of parks, including the following:

- In 2012, the Outdoor Industry Association estimated that national consumer spending on outdoor recreation generated \$646 billion in consumer spending, and directly supported 6.1 million jobs. In Maryland alone, outdoor recreation generated \$9.5 billion in annual consumer spending, and \$686 million in state and local tax revenue. Outdoor recreation was also estimated to generate 85,000 jobs in the State and an estimated \$2.8 billion in wages and salaries.⁴¹
- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
- Research from the University of Illinois shows that trees, parks, and green spaces have a profound impact on people's health and mental outlook.⁴²
- U.S. Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.⁴³
- Nearly half of active Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy*, https://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf; accessed December 2016

⁴² F.E. Kuo, "Environment and Crime in the Inner County: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime?" *Environment and Behavior*, Volume 33, p. 343-367

⁴³ Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report

⁴⁴ *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016*

The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More County Parks and Open Space, a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:⁴⁵

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Researchers have long touted the benefits of outdoor exercise. According to a study published in the “Journal of Environmental Science and Technology” by the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, “as little as five minutes of green exercise improves both mood and self-esteem.”⁴⁶

The popularity of outdoor fitness equipment emerged in China as they prepared to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. Their aim was to promote a society that promotes physical fitness and reaps the benefits of outdoor exercise. The United States has caught up on this trend, as parks and recreation departments have begun installing “outdoor gyms.” Equipment that can be found in these outdoor gyms is comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, pull down trainers, etc. With no additional equipment such as weights and resistance bands, the equipment is fairly easy to install. Outdoor fitness equipment provides a new opportunity for parks and recreation departments to increase the health of their communities, while offering them the opportunity to exercise outdoors. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community’s interaction with nature.

Nature Programming

Noted as early as 2003 in *Recreation Management* magazine, parks agencies have been seeing an increase in interest in environmental-oriented “back to nature” programs. In 2007, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public parks and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature.⁴⁷

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61% have nature-based facilities.

⁴⁵ Paul M. Sherer, “The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More County Parks and Open Space,” The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006

⁴⁶ Sally Russell, “Nature Break: Five Minutes of Green Nurture,” *Green Nurture Blog*, <http://blog.greennurture.com/tag/journal-of-environmental-science-and-technology>, accessed November 14, 2012.

⁴⁷ National Recreation and Parks Association, “NRPA Completes Agency Survey Regarding Children and Nature,” http://www.narpp.org/assets/Library/Children_in_Nature/nrpa_survey_regarding_children_and_nature_2007.pdf

- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90% indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies listed funding as most important followed by presence of wildlife and community support.

Figures from the Association for Interpretative Naturalists, a national group of nature professionals, demonstrate that nature-based programs are on the rise. According to Tim Merriman, the association's Executive Director, the group was founded in 1954 with 40 members. It now boasts 4,800 members, with research indicating that about 20,000 paid interpreters are working nationally, along with more than 500,000 unpaid volunteers staffing nature programs at parks, zoos, and museums. The growth of these programs is thought to come from replacing grandparents as the teacher about the "great outdoors." It is also speculated that a return to natural roots and renewed interest in life's basic elements was spurred as a response to the events of September 11, 2001.⁴⁸

In his book, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder,⁴⁹ Richard Louv introduced the concept of the restorative qualities of being out in nature, for both children and adults. This concept, and research in support of it, has led to a growing movement promoting connections with nature in daily life. One manifestation of this is the development of Nature Explore Classrooms in parks. Nature Explore⁵⁰ is a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and the non-profit organization Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, with a mission of helping children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral, joyful part of children's daily learning. Nature Explore works to support efforts to connect children with nature. More recently, Scott Sampson advanced the cause in a book entitled, How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature.⁵¹ Citing research supporting his case that connecting with nature is vital to the healthy development of individuals, communities, and the world, Sampson offers practical and helpful advice to parents, educators, and any other would-be nature mentors to kids.

⁴⁸ Margaret Ahrweiler, "Call of the Wild – From Beautiful Blossoms to Bugs and Guts, Nature Programs Are Growing as People Return to Their Roots," *Recreation Management*, <http://recmanagement.com/200310fe04.php>, October 2003

⁴⁹ Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Maryland, 2005

⁵⁰ National Arbor Day Foundation, "What is the Nature Explore Program," http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/NE_FAQ_002.pdf, accessed August 2012

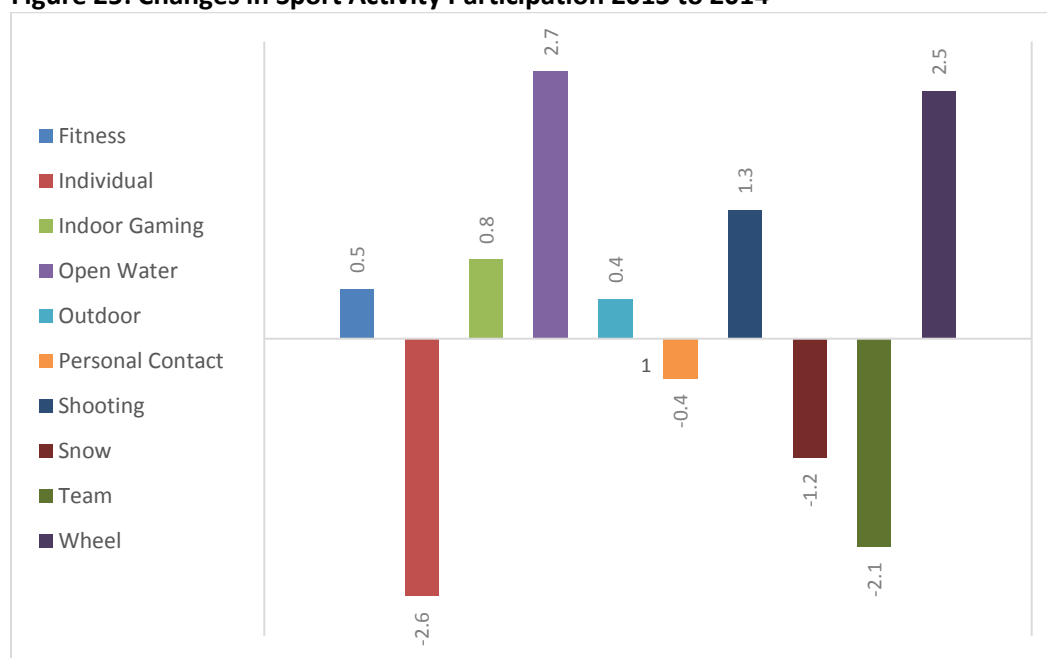
⁵¹ Scott D. Simpson, How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, N.Y., 2015.

Sports and Recreation Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) statistical survey on sports participation in the United States 2015 edition tracked participation in 54 different sports and activities for 2014. A summary of the survey results are noted in **Figure 25**, with several highlights noted below:⁵²

- Participation increased in 33 sports and activities in 2014 over the previous year. Roughly half that number (17) of sports and activities saw increases in 2013 compared to 2012.
- Open water sports saw the highest percentage increase (2.7%) in terms of number of participants. The increase is attributed to growth in popularity of boating (motor/power boat), canoeing, and kayaking.
- Individual sports and activities experienced the highest decrease in participation, falling 2.6% in 2014 compared to the previous year. The decrease is attributed to declining participation in bowling, golf, and tennis.

Figure 25: Changes in Sport Activity Participation 2013 to 2014



Source: National Sporting Goods Association, *Sports participation in the United States 2015 survey report*

Longer term data from National Sporting Goods Association show that despite a recent downturn in the participation in the past year, over the past decade, participation in individual sports has increased, especially in aerobic exercising, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, and yoga. **Table 11** illustrates a ten year change in participation for selected activities including both team sports and individual sports.⁵³

⁵² National Sporting Goods Association, "2015 Sport/Recreation Activity Participation Report," <http://www.nsga.org>, accessed May 2016

⁵³ National Sporting Goods Association, "Historical Sports Participation 2015 Report," <https://www.nsga.org/research/nsga-research-offerings/sports-participation-historical-file-2015>, accessed April 2016

Table 11: Ten-Year History of Sports Participation (in millions) 2005-2014

Sport	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Aerobic Exercising	33.7	34.8	33.2	42.0	44.1	44.2
Backpack/Wilderness Camping	13.3	13.0	12.3	11.6	12.2	12.0
Baseball	14.6	14.0	11.5	12.3	11.7	11.3
Basketball	29.9	24.1	24.4	26.1	25.5	23.7
Bicycle Riding	43.1	37.4	38.1	39.1	35.6	35.6
Camping (Vacation/Overnight)	46.0	47.5	50.9	42.8	39.3	39.5
Canoeing	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.7	7.3
Exercise Walking	86.0	89.8	93.4	97.1	96.3	104.3
Exercising with Equipment	54.2	52.9	57.2	55.5	53.1	55.1
Fishing (Salt Water)	10.0	10.4	8.2	9.7	9.5	9.4
Football (Flag)	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.8	6.3
Football (Tackle)	9.9	9.2	8.9	9.0	7.5	7.5
Football (Touch)	NA	NA	NA	NA	8.8	8.9
Golf	24.7	22.7	22.3	20.9	18.9	18.4
Gymnastics	NA	NA	3.9	5.1	5.1	5.4
Hiking	29.8	28.6	34.0	39.1	39.4	41.1
Kayaking	NA	5.9	4.9	7.1	8.1	9.0
Lacrosse	NA	1.2	NA	2.7	2.8	2.8
Mountain Biking (off road)	9.2	9.3	8.4	6.0	5.2	5.4
Running/Jogging	29.2	30.4	32.2	38.7	42.0	43.0
Scuba Diving (Open Water)	NA	2.4	NA	NA	2.7	2.4
Skateboarding	12.0	10.1	8.4	6.6	5.0	5.4
Soccer	14.1	13.8	13.6	13.9	12.8	13.4
Softball	14.1	12.4	11.8	10.4	10.0	9.5
Swimming	58.0	52.3	50.2	46.0	45.5	45.9
Tennis	11.1	12.3	10.8	13.1	12.6	12.4
Volleyball	13.2	12.0	10.7	10.1	10.1	10.2
Weight Lifting	35.5	33.2	34.5	29.1	31.3	34.0
Work-Out at Club/Gym/Fitness Studio	34.7	36.8	38.3	34.5	34.1	35.9
Wrestling	NA	2.1	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9
Yoga	NA	10.7	15.7	21.6	25.9	29.2

Source: National Sporting Goods Association

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness, and leisure activities in the United States. The following findings were highlighted in the 2016 report:⁵⁴

- Overall participation in sports, fitness, and related physical activities has fluctuated in recent years with an increase in team, winter, water, and fitness sports participation. Racquet and outdoor sport participation remained flat in 2015, while individual sports declined slightly.
- Team sports experienced the largest increase in participation, including at least a 4% increase in baseball, cheerleading, ice hockey, lacrosse, rugby, indoor soccer, team swimming, and flag and tackle football.
- Forty-three percent (43%) of parents reported an increase in spending on team sports at school in 2015.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all Americans are inactive, while 31% are active to a healthy level.

⁵⁴ Sports and Fitness Industry Association, *2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*

Adult and Youth Recreation Trends

Adult Recreation: Pickleball

No adult recreational sport is taking off faster than pickleball.⁵⁵ Pickleball is a racquet sport played on a badminton court with a lowered net, perforated plastic ball and wood paddles. While it originated in the Pacific Northwest in the 1960s, it has grown exponentially since 2000. The USA Pickle ball Association (USAPA) estimates that there were about 500 pickleball players in 2000, with that number growing to 125,000 in 2013. It is especially popular with the 50+ crowd, because it is low impact but gets the heart rate pumping.⁵⁶ Pickle ball is an attractive programming option for recreation managers, because it is adaptable to a variety of existing facilities – four pickleball courts fit in one tennis court.

Adult Sport Teams In and After the Work Place

Adult sports teams of all sorts, from competitive volleyball to local flag football teams to casual kickball, are becoming more and more popular around the country, especially among Millennials who grew up with a full extra-curricular schedule of team sports. While adult team sports participation is not limited to the Millennial generation by any means, a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Sports Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) found that Millennials are twice as likely as Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979) to participate in team sports as adults.⁵⁷

Adult team sports are attractive as ways to be social, get exercise, or just for something to do after work. Instead of the bar scene, this provides a more comfortable form of interaction for many.⁵⁸

Sports teams in the work place are also a growing trend in the United States as companies look for new ways to keep their employees healthy and happy. The United States Tennis Association (USTA) promotes tennis in the work place, citing the following benefits:

- Developing team-building
- Creating leadership opportunities
- Increasing employee morale and overall health

A recent story on National Public Radio examined sports participation among adults in Finland.⁵⁹ Finland consistently makes the top-five list of “most physically active European countries” according to European Commission studies. There is a strong tradition of employers encouraging sports participation among their employees, which started about a century ago with the forest industry. These days, about 90 percent of employers provide some kind of support for their employee’s physical activity. Finns say it is understood that healthy employees do better work.

⁵⁵ Chris Gelbach, “Never Stop Playing: Trends in Adult Recreational Sports” *Recreation Management*, September 2013, http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201309fe02, accessed January 2015

⁵⁶ David Crumpler, “Pickleball a fast-growing sport, especially for the 50 and older crowd,” *Florida Times Union*, January 26, 2015, <http://jacksonville.com/prime-time/2015-01-26/story/pickleball-fast-growing-sport-especially-50-and-older-crowd>, accessed January 2015

⁵⁷ Sarah M. Wojcik, “Millennials Fuel Rise of For-profit Recreation Leagues,” *The Morning Call*, <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/mc-millennials-adult-sports-leagues-20190727-story.html>, July 27, 2015, accessed July, 2015

⁵⁸ Liz Butterfield, “Adult Sport Leagues: The New After Work Social Scene,” *RVA News*, <http://rvanews.com/sports/adult-sport-leagues-the-new-after-work-social-scene/100639>, August 8, 2013, accessed July, 2015

⁵⁹ Rae Ellen Bichell, “How Finns Make Sports Part of Everyday Life,” *National Public Radio Morning Addition*, July 28, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/healthshots/2015/07/28/426748088>

Youth Sports

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness, and leisure activities in the United States. The following findings regarding youth and sports were highlighted in the 2016 report:⁶⁰ In 2015, youth aged 6-16 (Generation Z) participation was highest for outdoor (62%), team (59%), and fitness sports (51%). Camping was a top interest for youth across the age spectrum, age 6-24.

In 2009, an article in *The Wall Street Journal* observed lacrosse had become one of the country's fastest growing team sports. Participation in high-school lacrosse almost doubled in the first decade of the century. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over age 7 played lacrosse in 2009.⁶¹ A 2011 report, U.S. "Trends in Team Sports," found that lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.⁶²

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation trends are also a recurring topic of study by the United States Forest Service through the Internet Research Information Series (IRIS). An IRIS report dated January 2012⁶³ provides the following recent nature-based outdoor recreation trends: Participation in walking for pleasure and family gatherings outdoors were the two most popular activities for the U.S. population as a whole. These outdoor activities were followed closely in popularity by viewing/photographing wildlife, boating, fishing, snow/ice activities, and swimming. There has been a growing momentum in participation in sightseeing, birding, and wildlife watching in recent years.

The Outdoor Foundation releases a "Participation in Outdoor Recreation Report" annually. According to the 2016 Topline Report,⁶⁴ nearly half (48.4%) of Americans participated in outdoor recreation activities in 2015. This figure remained static from 2015, but dropped slightly (less than 1%) from 2013, with extreme weather and an unusually cold winter likely contributed to the decline. Increased participation in outdoor recreation activities were strong in paddle sports, with stand up paddle boarding remaining the top outdoor activity for growth, with participation growing by 26% from 2014 to 2015.

Additional key findings from the Outdoor Foundation's 2016 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report" include:

Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- In 2015, 48.4% of Americans ages 6 and older participated in at least one outdoor activity. This equated to 142.4 million Americans who went on a collective 11.7 billion outdoor recreation outings.
- Top five participation percentage increase in outdoor activities in the past three years were in stand up paddle boarding, triathlon (traditional/road), kayak fishing, triathlon(non-traditional/off-road), and trail running.

⁶⁰ Sports and Fitness Industry Association, *2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*, <http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/>.

⁶¹ Evans and Trachtenberg, "Lacrosse Muscles Its Way West," *The Wall Street Journal*, May, 2009.

⁶² SMGA, "2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports," Fall 2011,"

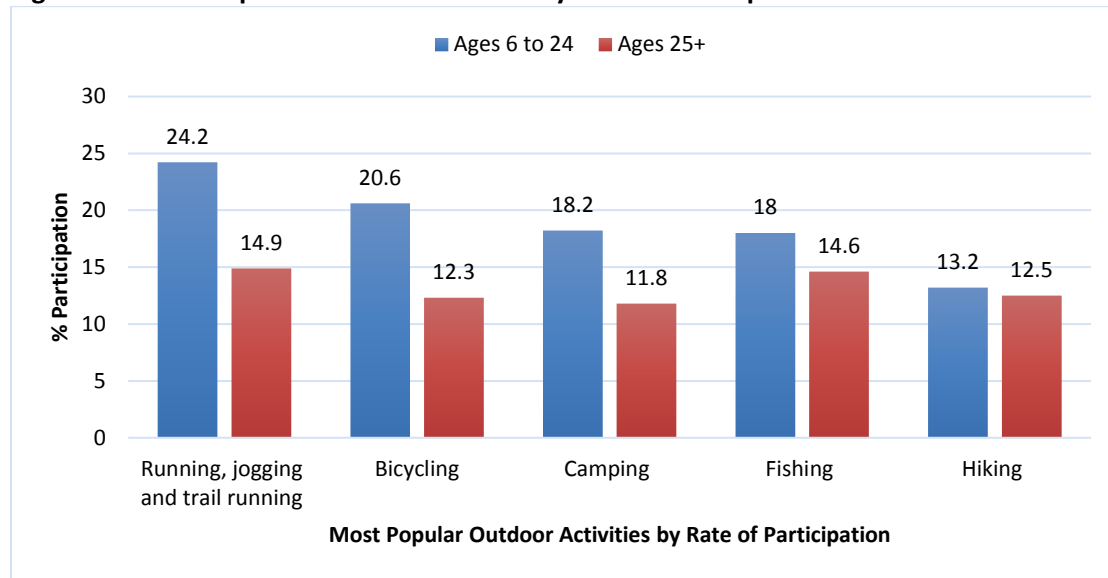
⁶³ USDA Forest Service, "Recent Outdoor Recreation Trends," Internet Research Information Series (IRIS) Research Brief, January 2012, <http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/nrrt/nsre/IRISRec/IRISRec23rpt.pdf>, accessed August, 2012.

⁶⁴ Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016

- Participation among youths ages 6 to 12 was at 63%, ages 13 to 17 was at 59%, and ages 18 to 24 was at 57%.
- Participation among adults ages 25 to 44 was at 56%, and 37% among adults ages 45 and older.

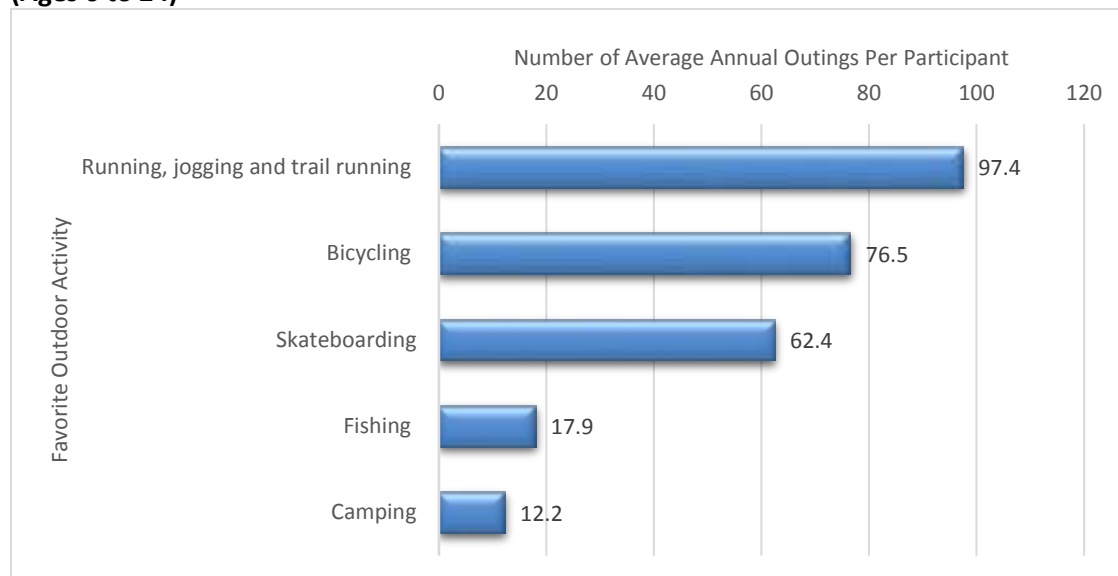
As illustrated in **Figure 26-28** the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” also lists the most popular (by participation rate) and favorite (by frequency of participation) outdoor activities for youth and young adults ages 6-24, and adults over the age of 25 nationwide.

Figure 26: Most Popular Outdoor Activities by Rate of Participation



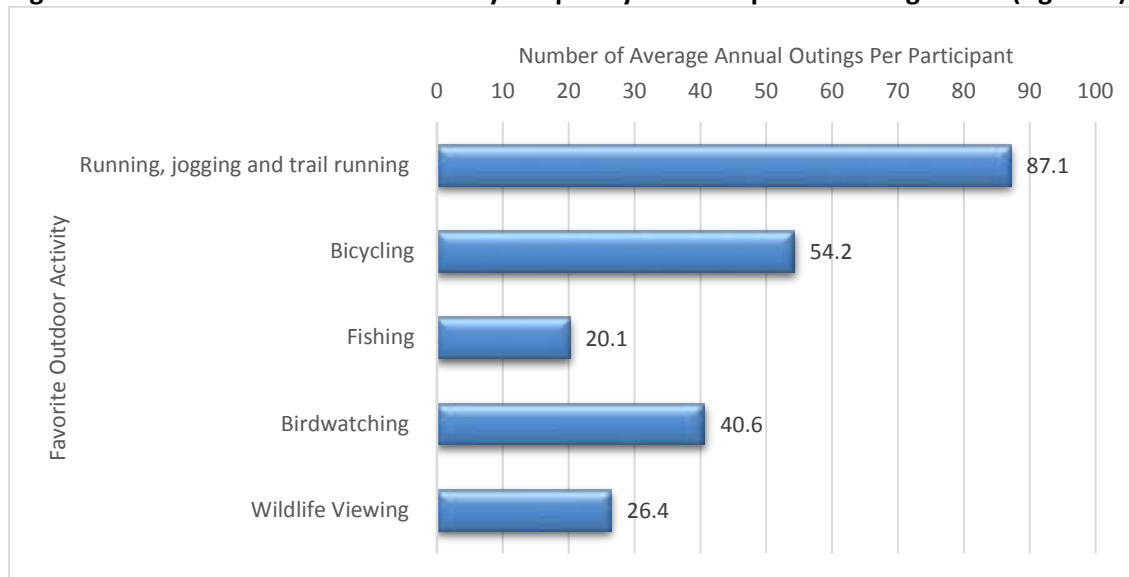
Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Figure 27: Favorite Outdoor Activities by Frequency of Participation among Youths and Young Adults (Ages 6 to 24)



Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Figure 28: Favorite Outdoor Activities by Frequency of Participation among Adults (Age 25+)



Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Trail Recreation and Cycling Trends

For trail-related recreation activities such as hiking, bicycling, and running, the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Topline Report” indicates a positive three-year trend for trail running, running/jogging, hiking, mountain biking, and BMX biking, as shown on **Table 12**. Additionally, participation in trail running and BMX biking is up significantly over the recent three-year period.

Table 12: Cycling and Trail Recreation Participation by Activity (Ages 6+)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	3 Year Average Change
BMX Bicycling	2,369	1,547	2,175	2,168	2,350	2,690	7.5%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	7,161	6,816	7,714	8,542	8,044	8,316	2.8%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	39,320	40,349	39,232	40,888	39,725	38,280	-0.8%
Hiking (Day)	32,496	34,491	34,545	34,378	36,222	37,232	2.6%
Running/Jogging	50,713	52,187	54,188	51,127	49,408	48,496	-2.3%
Trail Running	5,136	5,610	6,003	6,792	7,531	8,139	10.7%

Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Other Cycling Trends

- Bicycle touring is becoming a fast-growing trend around the world, including the United States and Canada. “Travelers are seeking out bike tours to stay active, minimize environmental impact, and experience diverse landscapes and Countyscapes at a closer level.”⁶⁵
- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States as well. Bikes and Hikes L.A., an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company founded in September 2010, offers visitors the opportunity to, “see the city’s great outdoors while getting a good workout.” In New York, a hotel and a bike store are partnered to offer guests cruisers to explore the city during the summer of 2014.⁶⁶
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is “fat bike,” multiple speed bikes that are made to ride where other bikes cannot be ridden, with tires that are up to five inches wide run at low pressure for extra traction. Most fat bikes are used to ride on snow, but they are also very effective for riding on any loose surface like sand or mud. They also work well on most rough terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that wouldn’t be possible otherwise.⁶⁷

Therapeutic Recreation

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) established that persons with disabilities have the right to the same access to parks and recreation facilities and programming as those without disabilities. In 2004, The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, “Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities.”⁶⁸ This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth, and adults with disabilities. The six elements are:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing.
2. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation.
3. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility.
4. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities.
5. Ensure access to key health and support services.
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities.

Therapeutic Services bring two forms of services for persons with disabilities into play, specific programming and inclusion services. Individuals with disabilities need not only functional skills but to have physical and social environments in the community that are receptive to them and accommodating to individual needs. Inclusion allows individuals to determine their own interests and follow them.

Many park and recreation departments around the country are offering specific programming for people with disabilities, but not as many offer inclusion services. In “Play for All—Therapeutic Recreation Embraces All Abilities,” an article in *Recreation Management* magazine,⁶⁹ Dana Carman described resources for communities looking to expand their therapeutic recreation services.

⁶⁵ Hope Nardini, “Bike Tourism a Rising Trend,” *Ethic Traveler*, <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/08/bike-tourism-a-rising-trend/>, accessed March 2014

⁶⁶ Michelle Baran, “New Trend: Urban Bike Tours in Los Angeles and New York,” *Budget Travel Blog*, <http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/new-trend-urban-bike-tours-in-los-angeles-and-new-york,11772/>, accessed March 2014

⁶⁷ Steven Pease, “Fat Bikes, How to Get the Most Out of Winter Cycling,” *Minnesota Cycling Examiner*, <http://www.examiner.com/article/fat-bikes-the-latest-trend-adventure-cycling>, February 1, 2014.

⁶⁸ National Council on Disability, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, December 2004, <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004>.

⁶⁹ Dana Carman, “Play for All,” *Recreation Management*, February 2007, <http://recmanagement.com/200710fe03.php>, accessed May 2016

Therapeutic recreation includes a renewed focus on serving people with the social/emotional challenges associated with “invisible disabilities” such as ADHD, bipolar disorders, spectrum disorders and sensory integration disorders. A growing number of park and recreation departments are making services for those with invisible disabilities a successful part of their programming as well. When well done, these same strategies improve the recreation experience for everyone.⁷⁰

Role and Response of Local Government

Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Some local governments are now accepting the role of providing preventative health care through parks and recreation services. The following concepts are from the International City/ County Management Association.⁷¹

- Parks and recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- There is growing support for recreation programs that encourage active living within their community.
- One of the highest priorities is a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

In summary, the United States, its states, and its communities share the enormous task of reducing the health and economic burden of obesity. While numerous programs, policies, and products have been designed to address the problem, there is no magic bullet to make it go away. The role of public parks and recreation as a health promotion and prevention agency has come of age. What matters is refocusing its efforts to ensure the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities and citizens.

Administration Trends for Recreation and Parks

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed, and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out, and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness.

The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

⁷⁰ Kelli Anderson, “A Welcome Inclusion,” *Recreation Management*, October 2010, <http://recmanagement.com/201010fe03.php>, accessed February 2015

⁷¹ International City/County Management Association, www.ICMA.org, accessed June 2012.

Listed below are additional administrative national trends:

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Information technology allows for better tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often determined by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

Agency Accreditation

Parks and recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency’s commitment to 150 standards. Accreditation is a distinguished mark of excellence that affords external recognition of an organization’s commitment to quality and improvement.

The National Recreation and Parks Association administratively sponsors two distinct accreditation programs: The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT) approves academic institutions and the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) approves agencies. It is the only national accreditation of parks and recreation agencies, and is a valuable measure of an agency’s overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

On September 14, 2010 the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued an amended regulation implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 2010 Standards)⁷² and, for the first time, the regulations were expanded to include recreation environment design requirements. Covered entities were to be compliant with design and construction requirements and the development of three-year transition plan by March 15, 2012. The deadline for implementation of the three-year transition plan was March 15, 2015.

Funding

According to *Recreation Management* magazine’s 2015 State of the Industry Report, survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2012 through 2014 indicated a continued recovery from the impact of the recession of 2008. From 2013 to 2014, 44.1% of respondents reported that their revenues had either had increased and another 44.1% reported revenues staying steady. About 48.7% of respondents said they expected revenues to continue to increase in 2015, while 44% expected no change.

Trends in Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers

Active Network offers expertise in activity and participation management. Its mission is to make the world a more active place. In the agency’s blog, it offered the following marketing mix ideas which came out of a meeting with park and recreational professionals in the Chicago area.⁷³

- Updated booths and community event presence—Utilization of a tablet or laptop to show programs you offer and provide event participants the opportunity to register on the spot.
- Facebook redirect app—This application redirects people automatically to the link you provide. Add it to your Facebook page.

⁷² U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Home Page, <http://www.ada.gov/>, accessed November 15, 2012.

⁷³ Active Network, <http://www.activenetwork.com>, accessed May 2014

- Instagram challenge—Think about how you can use mobile and social tools at your next event. It could be an Instagram contest during an event set up as a scavenger hunt with participants taking pictures of clues and posting them on Instagram.
- Social media coupons—Research indicates that the top reason people follow an organization on a social network is to receive discounts or coupons. Consider posting an event discount on your social networks redeemable by accessing on phone or printing out.

Mobile marketing is a growing trend. Social websites and apps are among the most used features on mobile phones. Popular social media marketing tools include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.⁷⁴

Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans own a cell phone, and most use the devices for much more than phone calls. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults ages 30 and older. Usage rates trends indicate that Millennials tend to get information most frequently using mobile devices such as smartphones. For example, 97% of cell phone owners ages 18–29 send and receive text messages, compared to 94% of ages 30–49, 75% of ages 50–64, and 35% of those 65 and older. In 2016, the vast majority of the population in the United States has access to a smartphone, computer, or other device, and is nearly always “connected.”

⁷⁴ Jacqueline Woerner, “The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015,” Emarsys Blog, <http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/>, accessed February 26, 2015.

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Appendix C: 2016 Open Link Survey Summary Results

Survey Summary Report

January 2017

As part of the planning process to update the Charles County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan for 2017, the County's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism administered an online survey as a means of collecting additional public feedback. The survey consisted of 16 questions, was hosted by the Department utilizing the well-known Survey Monkey online tool, and remained active from November 1, 2016 through November 30, 2016. The Department publicized and promoted participation in the survey through its online social media outlets, email blasts to registrants of recreation programs, postings at public facilities, and by word of mouth at stakeholder and staff engagement sessions.

Over 1,000 individual respondents participated in the 2017 Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Online Survey

This survey was not intended to be statistically valid, and was hosted in an open format available for any member of the public to participate. In hosting such a survey, higher response rates from stakeholders in the County's parks and recreation system, such as members of user organizations, including sports groups or athletics teams, should be presumed versus non-users of the park systems, who likely have little inherent interest in the topic. The perceptions, ideas, and information gathered from the survey have value in that they do shed light on what is important to some presumably engaged residents in the provision of public parks, recreation, and open spaces in the County. Responses to the survey were considered in the formulation of goals and recommendations for targeting the enhancement of the County's parks and recreation system. Not all respondents answered all questions.

Key Findings based on responses to all questions

The responses received to this survey were analyzed for overall themes or trends that the County should consider in planning for its parks and recreation system. Based on the survey responses as a whole, key focus areas to consider included:

- Many survey respondents visited a variety of County parks and recreation sites at least once, if not a few times over the last year. However, over 10% of respondents indicated visiting 27 individual County sites more than 20 times. Most sites receiving such reported high-rates of return visitation typically included facilities for organized sports leagues and recreation program.
- Nearly 70% of respondents report most commonly using parks and recreation facilities that are close to home – generally no more than 10 miles away.
- The vast majority of respondents were highly satisfied with the physical condition of facilities and quality of recreation programs and services of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.
- Respondents indicated that funding of improvements of County parks facilities and enhancement of recreation services should be done through both a tax increase and increased user fees, and not one means versus the other.

- The enhancement of the County’s trail system, waterfront recreation sites and boat launches, and sports fields were identified as high priorities for targeting improvements.

Summary of results by question:

Question 1:

Are you a resident of Charles County? If not, which county do you reside?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I am a resident of Charles County	87.6%	870
No, I am a resident of	12.4%	123
Answered Question		993
Skipped Question		32

Question 2:

In the past 12 months, how many times have you or members of your household visited any of the following County Locations?					
Answer Options	No visits	1-5 visits	6-10 visits	11-20 visits	More than 20 visits

Respondents were offered a selection of 68 individual County parks, recreation facilities, or open space sites in which to offer responses. The question was answered 1,024 times, and skipped by a single respondent. Overall findings from the responses:

The top five sites in terms of the total number of respondents indicating they have visited the property at least once in the past year were:

- 1) Gilbert Run Park – 561 responses
- 2) Indian Head Rail Trail – 557 responses
- 3) Laurel Springs Regional Park – 556 responses
- 4) Capital Clubhouse – 460 responses
- 5) White Plains Regional Park – 405 responses

Conversely, the sites that fewest total number of respondents indicated visiting in the past year were:

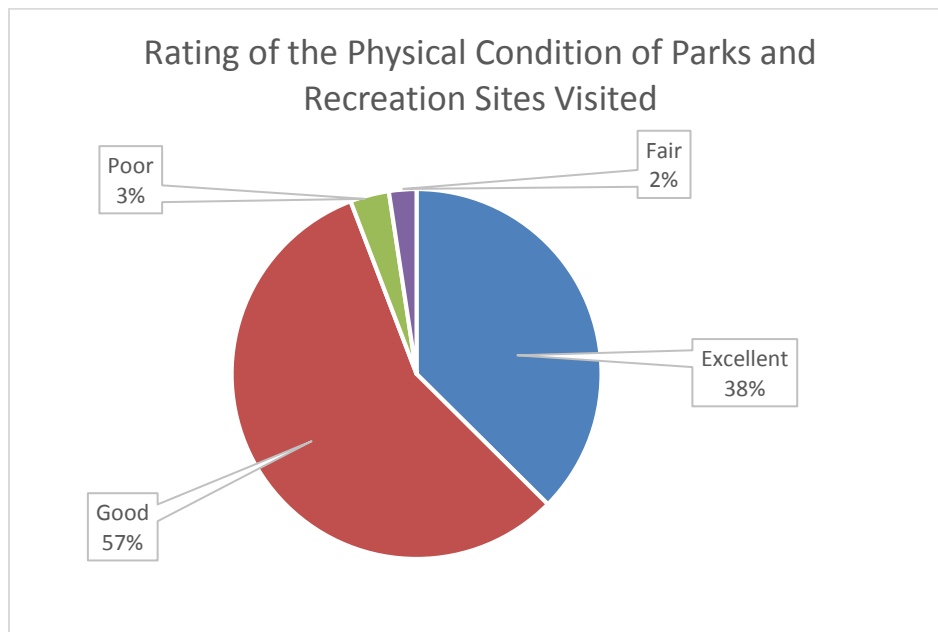
- 1) Nanjemoy Senior Center – 21 responses
- 2) Silver Linden Park – 23 responses
- 3) Hatton Creek Boat Launch – 32 responses
- 4) Southern Park – 40 responses
- 5) Douglas Point State Natural Resources Management Area – 40 responses

In terms of frequency of visitation to each site, in all but one case, the majority (over 50%) of respondents noted visiting the site one to five times over the past year. Several sites, most notably the Charles County Welcome Center and Thomas Stone National Historic Site were visited no more than one to five times by approximately 88% of respondents noting visitation. Conversely, over 10% of respondents reported a frequency of more than 20 visits per year at 27 individual parks and recreation sites.

Question 3:

During the 12 months, how would you rate the overall physical condition and quality of locations most visited in Question #2?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	37.4%	372
Good	56.7%	564
Poor	3.4%	34
Fair	2.4%	24
Comments		93
<i>answered question</i>		994
<i>skipped question</i>		31



The majority of survey respondents indicated that they believe the physical condition of the parks, recreation, and open site visited were in good condition. Roughly 95% of respondents to this questions noted the facilities were in good to excellent condition.

Question 4:

Do the facilities in Question #2 meet your needs for ADA accessibility?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	94.7%	844
No	5.3%	47
If No, what areas need improvement?		66
Answered Question		891
Skipped Question		134

Providing accessible facilities and amenities for all parts of the population, including those with mental or physical challenges is a federally mandated obligation of public agencies through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Respondents to this question noted their needs for ADA accessible were generally being met by County facilities they visited.

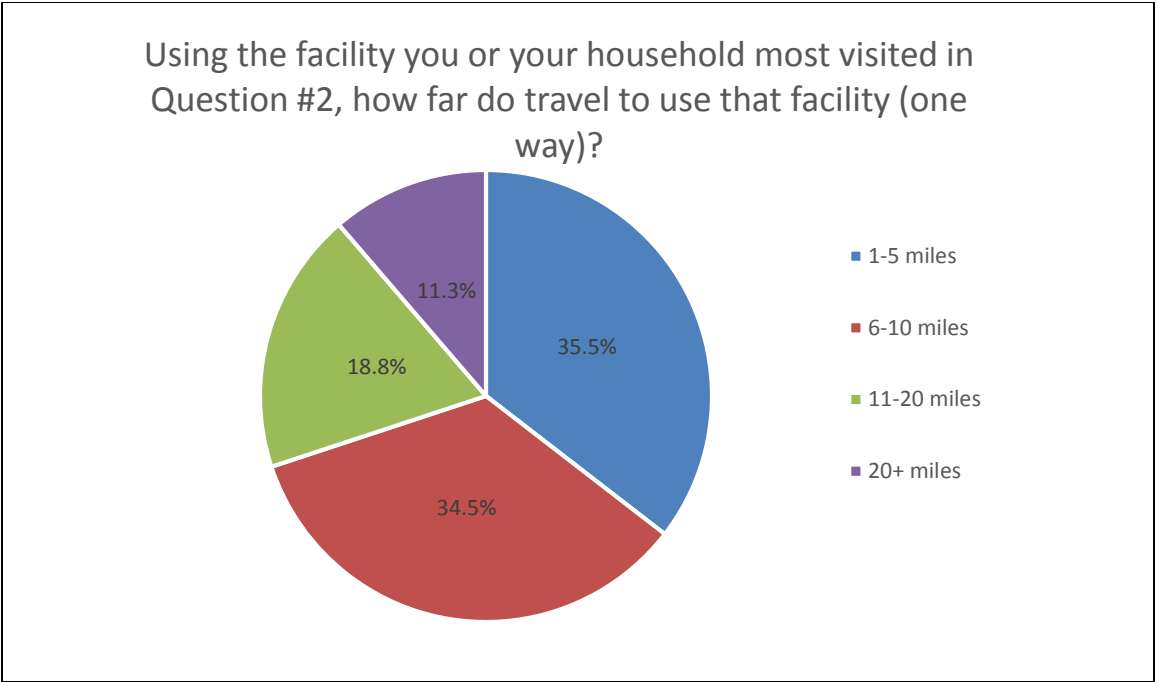
Question 5:

Do you feel the personal safety and security needs are met at the facilities in Question #2?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	90.8%	878
No	9.2%	89
In No, what areas need improvement?		72
Answered Question		967
Skipped Question		58

Generally, most respondents indicated that they felt safe/secure while visiting Charles County parks, recreation, and open space sites. However, nearly 10% of respondents noted they did not feel that their personal safety and security needs were being met at these facilities.

Question 6:

Using the facility you or your household most visited in Question #2, how far do travel to use that facility (one way)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-5 miles	35.5%	352
6-10 miles	34.5%	342
11-20 miles	18.8%	186
20+ miles	11.3%	112
Answered Question		992
Skipped Question		33



The majority of respondents to this question, roughly 70%, indicated living within ten miles or less of the park or recreation facility then most visited in Charles County. This emphasizes the significance of “close to home” recreation options for this community.

Question 7:

In the past 12 months, how many times have you participated in the following activities in Charles County?

Answer Options	Zero	1-5	6-10	11-20	More than 20	Response Count
Walking, Running, Hiking	167	188	123	63	252	793
Biking	384	166	67	42	84	743
Nature exploration - Trail usage, Botany, Ornithology	398	192	71	27	54	742
Playground Use/General Play	304	188	99	51	108	750
Picnic Areas/Shelters	349	278	64	28	26	745
Dog Parks	559	107	26	12	18	722
Adult Sports Leagues	613	35	17	9	45	719
Youth Sports Leagues	415	88	38	35	169	745
Gymnastics/Dance/Cheerleading	584	52	28	11	40	715
Swimming	389	131	72	48	98	738
Summer Camps	586	82	19	16	23	726
Trips and Tours	600	97	9	4	6	716
Therapeutic Recreation	636	42	13	8	16	715
Community Center Events	485	183	43	10	17	738
Ice Skating/Figure Skating/Hockey	508	115	24	8	76	731
Racquet Sports - Tennis, Pickleball, Table Tennis	654	33	10	5	14	716
Disc Golf	629	46	12	12	32	731
Golf	596	80	19	3	25	723
Foot Golf	682	27	2	0	2	713
Equestrian	671	22	8	1	16	718
Kayaking/Canoeing	554	120	24	15	19	732
Boating	570	86	18	17	28	719
Fishing	498	126	42	22	36	724
Other activities (please specify)						56
Answered Question						834
Skipped Question						191

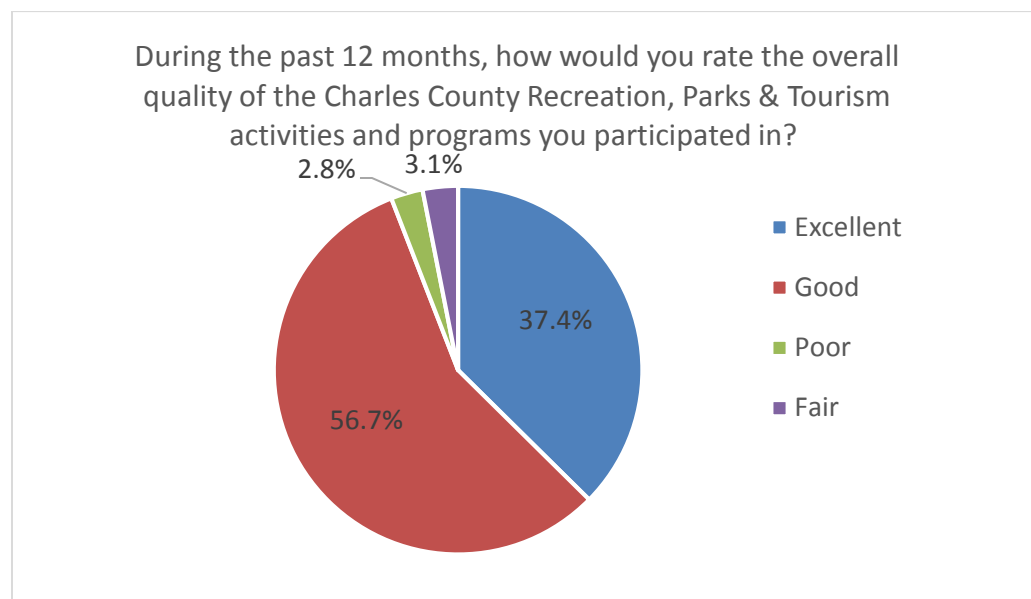
By the total number of responses indicating participation or facility usage at least once in the past year, respondents indicated that the activities they participated in, or facilities they used the most included:

- 1) Walking, running, and/or hiking – 626 responses
- 2) Playground Use/General Play – 446 responses
- 3) Picnic Areas/Shelters – 396 responses
- 4) Biking – 359 responses
- 5) Swimming – 349 responses

Question 8:

During the past 12 months, how would you rate the overall quality of the Charles County Recreation, Parks & Tourism activities, and programs you participated in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	37.4%	297
Good	56.7%	451
Poor	2.8%	22
Fair	3.1%	25
Comments		53
Answered Question		795
Skipped Question		230

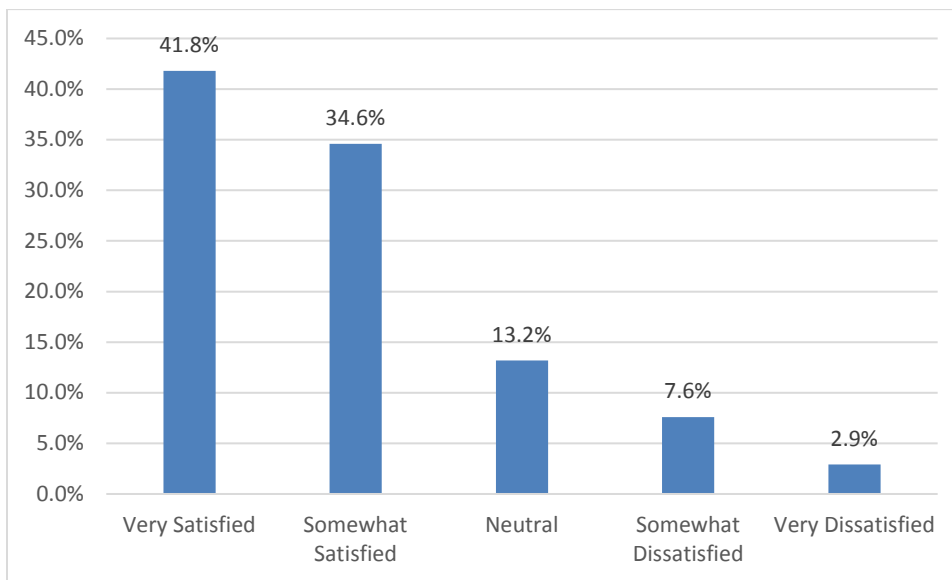


Nearly 95% of respondents reported the quality of Charles County Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs and activities that they participated in to be “good” or “excellent.”

Question 9:

How satisfied are you with the availability of recreational opportunities within Charles County?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Satisfied	41.8%	343
Somewhat Satisfied	34.6%	284
Neutral	13.2%	108
Somewhat Dissatisfied	7.6%	62
Very Dissatisfied	2.9%	24
Answered Question		821
Skipped Question		204



The vast majority of respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied or at least somewhat satisfied with the existing recreational opportunities found within Charles County. Although this high rate of general satisfaction is praiseworthy, with over 1/3 of respondents only “somewhat satisfied” and nearly 1/4 feeling “neutral” or some level of dissatisfaction, there appears to be room for improving recreational opportunities in the County.

Question 10:

Using the activities below, please choose and rank the top 5 most needed recreational amenities in Charles County

Answer Options	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	4th Priority	5th Priority	Rating Average	Response Count
Answered Question	785						
Skipped Question	240						

The options for respondents to select from and rank consisted of the following activities and facilities that provide opportunities for participation in activities:

Paved walking and biking trails	Community parks	OHV trails
Unpaved natural trails	Additional accessibility of current amenities	Picnic areas/pavilions
Nature center	Senior Centers	Outdoor amphitheater
Preservation of historic sites	Indoor swimming/leisure pool	Archery
Green space, open space, unimproved nature areas	Outdoor swimming/leisure pool	Shooting Range
Natural grass athletic fields (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey)	Spray ground/Spray park	Hunting
Synthetic turf athletic fields (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey)	Golf Course	Fishing
Baseball/Softball fields	Ice skating/hockey	Public beach access
Indoor multi-sport recreation complex	Indoor fitness and exercise facility	Indoor basketball/volleyball courts
Multi-use community center	Off leash dog parks	Outdoor basketball
	Equestrian trails	Sand volleyball courts
	Skate park/BMX park	Tennis courts
	Kayak/canoe launches	Pickleball courts
	Boat ramps	Racquetball courts
	Camping	Other (please specify)

Based on the total responses and priority rankings collected, the following activity types were identified as the most needed recreational amenities in Charles County:

- 1) Paved walking and biking trails
- 2) Indoor multi-sport recreation complex
- 3) Indoor fitness and exercise facility
- 4) Preservation of historic structures
- 5) Public beach access

Question 11:

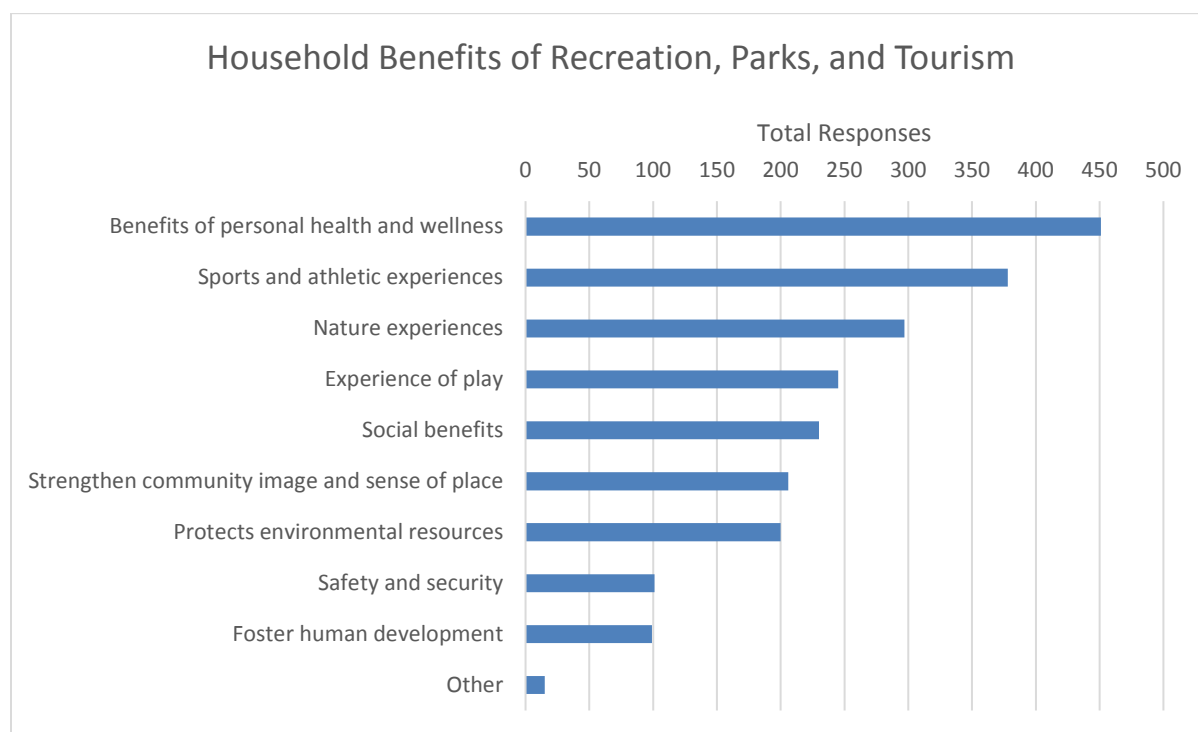
Please identify the top three benefits your household feels they receive through Charles County Recreation, Parks & Tourism.

Answered Question 768

Skipped Question 257

The ten response options are noted in the graph below. By total number of responses, the top benefits respondents noted that their households received through Charles County Recreation, Parks, and Tourism were:

- 1) Benefits of personal health and wellness
 - a. Selected by 59% of respondents; a majority.
- 2) Sports and athletic experiences
 - a. Selected by 49% of respondents
- 3) Nature experiences
 - a. Selected by 39% of respondents



Question 12:

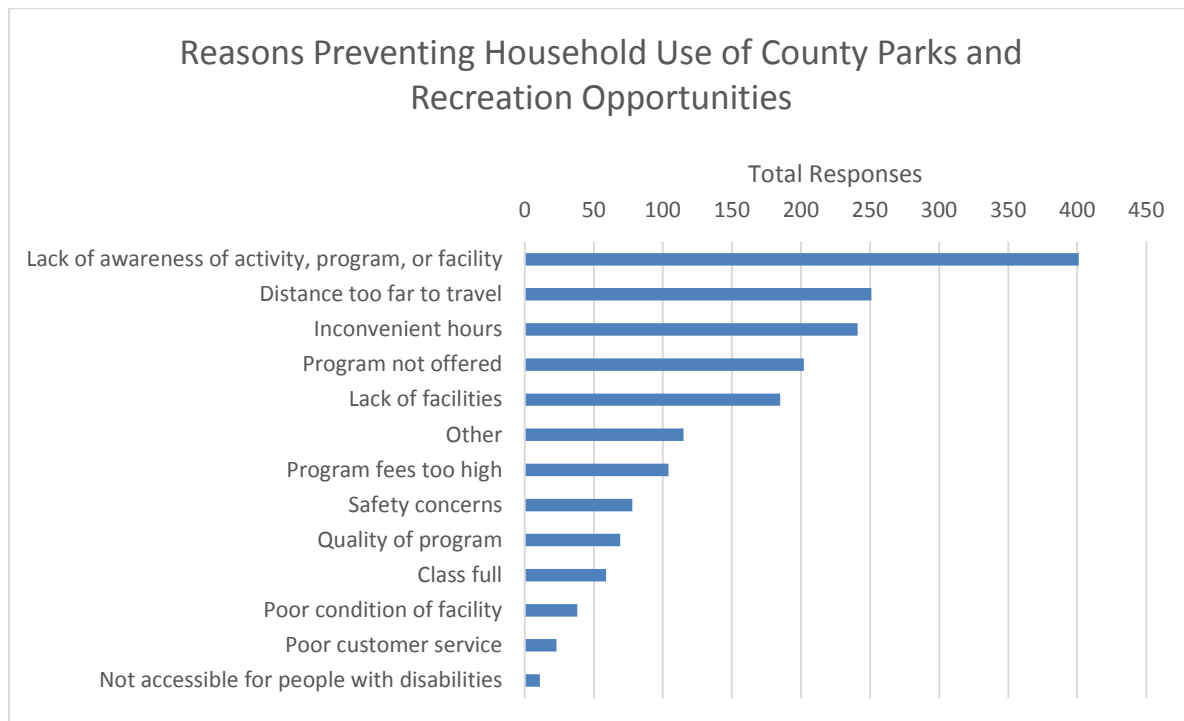
Please identify the top three reasons preventing your household from using county parks, trails, activities, programs, or facilities more often.

answered question 664

skipped question 361

As illustrated in the graph below, the top reasons preventing respondents' households from using County parks, recreation programs and amenities more often were:

1. Lack of awareness of activity, program, or facility
 - a. The majority of respondents (60%) noted this as a barrier to participation.
2. Distance too far to travel
 - a. 38% of respondents indicated this was a problem.
3. Inconvenient hours
 - a. 36% of respondents indicated that the hours facilities and amenities were available made it difficult for their household to use more often.



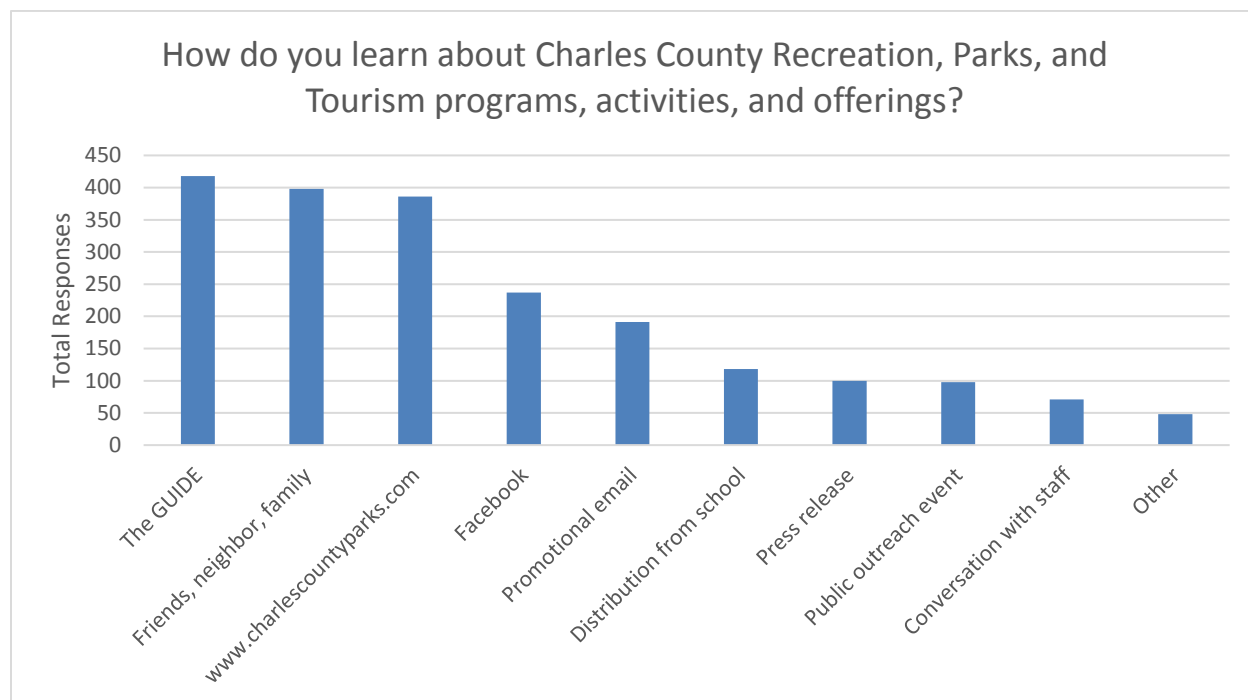
Question 13:

Please identify the top three ways you most often learn about Charles County Recreation, Parks & Tourism programs, activities, and offerings.

Answered Question 769

Skipped Question 256

As illustrated in the following graph, the GUIDE, word of mouth from friends and family, and the Charles County Recreation, Parks, and Tourism website were noted as the most often used means of learning about programs, activities, and offerings by respondents. Over 50% of respondents noted each of these as a top way of learning about offerings.

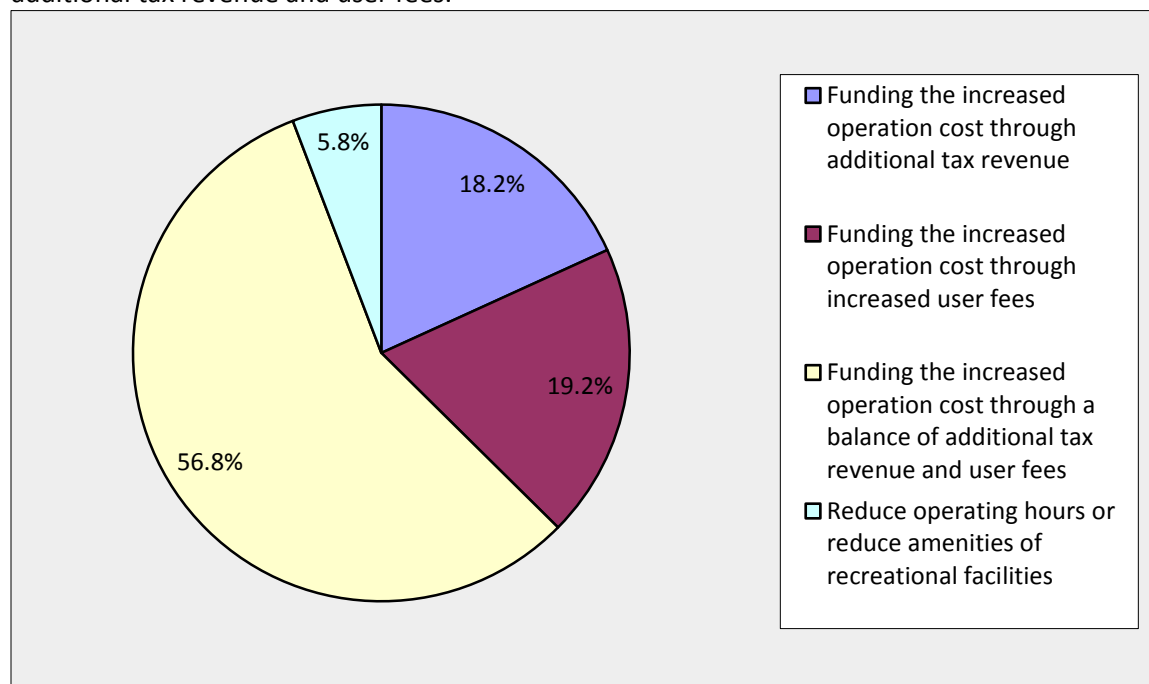


Question 14:

Funding for the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism is split between the General Fund (tax dollars), and the Enterprise Fund (user fees). As the cost to operate and maintain the facilities continue to rise which one option would you Most Support?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Funding the increased operation cost through additional tax revenue	18.2%	141
Funding the increased operation cost through increased user fees	19.2%	149
Funding the increased operation cost through a balance of additional tax revenue and user fees	56.8%	440
Reduce operating hours or reduce amenities of recreational facilities	5.8%	45
Answered Question		775
Skipped Question		250

The majority of respondents (nearly 57%) noted that to meet rising costs for operating and maintaining County parks and recreation facilities, they would prefer increased funding through a balance of additional tax revenue and user fees.



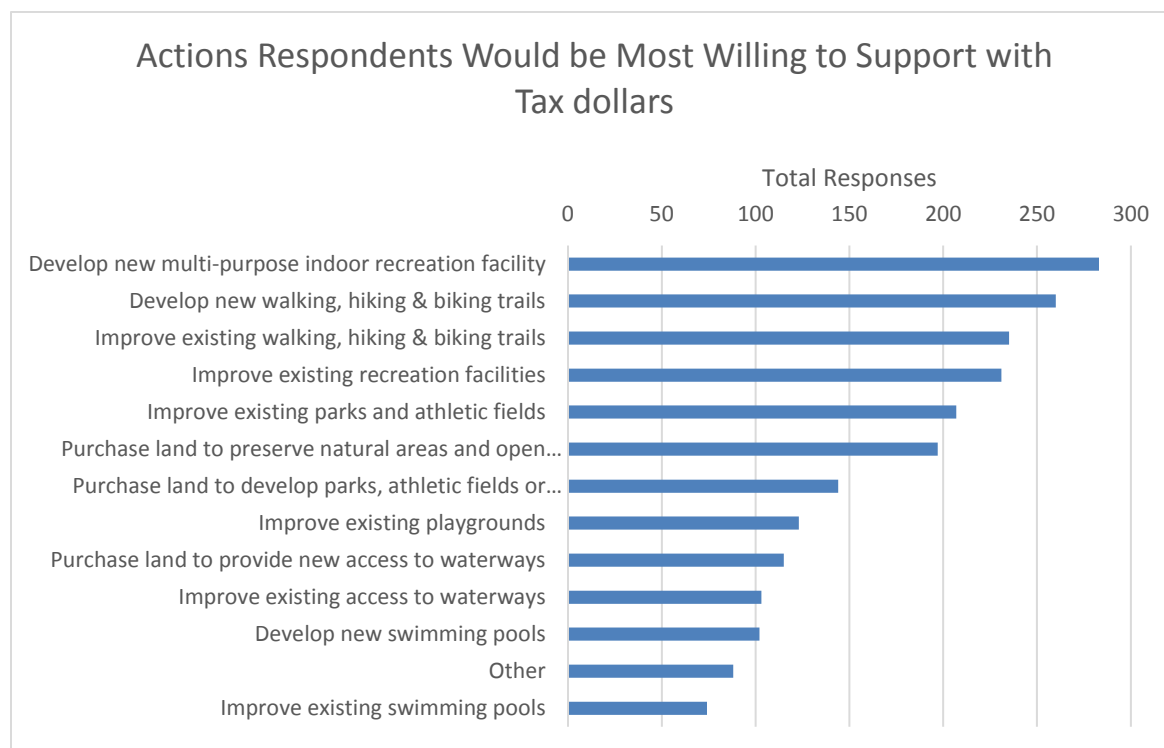
Question 15:

Please identify the top three actions you would be most willing to support with your tax dollars.

Answer Options	Top support	2nd most support	3rd most support	Rating Average	Response Count
<i>Answered Question</i>					741
<i>Skipped Question</i>					284

Over 30% of respondents indicated that they would be most willing to support the following actions to enhance the Charles County parks and recreation system with their tax dollars:

- Develop new multi-purpose indoor recreation center
- Develop new walking, hiking, and biking trails
- Improve existing walking, hiking, and biking trails



Question 16:

Please provide any additional comments or areas of consideration for the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism.

Total responses received 177, with 848 respondents having skipped the question.

Comments received for question 16 and others have been included in the full survey findings report, which has been provided as a staff resource document.

Appendix D: LPPRP Inventory

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Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Site Inventory																																																				
Updated: August 2017			County and Municipal Sites				State/Federal Acres				Facilities (Number given refers to the number of facilities unless otherwise specified)																																									
Facility Name	Location / Address	Election District	Recreation Acreage (County & Municipal)	Natural Resource Acreage (County & Municipal)	Quasi-public Recreation Lands (may be privately owned)	Recreation Acreage (State / Federal)	Natural Resource Acreage (State / Federal)	Site or Facility Classification	Ownership	Accessory Amenities			Community Center	Athletic Fields				Sports Courts				Aquatic and Waterfront Facilities				Outdoor Recreation Amenities								Comment																		
										Concession Stand	Parking	Rest Rooms		Athletic Fields - Baseball Practice Fields	Athletic Fields - Baseball Game Fields	Athletic Field - Multi-purpose	Athletic Fields - Other	Basketball Court (indoor-gym)	Basketball Court (outdoor)	Ice Rink	Court - Multi-purpose / Other	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court (indoor - gym)	Beach Length (miles)	Boat Ramps (large)	Boat Ramps (small)	Boat Slips	Canoe & Kayak Water Trails (miles)	Pier	Shoreline (tidal, accessible) miles	Swim Pool outdoor	Swim Pool Indoor	Camp Sites		Equestrian Center	Golf Course (public)	Hunting (Acres)	Outdoor Stadium Seats	Outdoor Theater Seats	Picnic Pavilion	Picnic Tables	Tot Lots / Play-ground	Trails - Hiking / Biking (miles)	Trails - Equestrian (miles)	Trails - Off-road Vehicles (miles)							
Hawthorne Country Club	8760 Hawthorne Road, La Plata, MD	1			80			Special Use Area	Private												2																					Golf Course (9-hole)										
Hemlock Court	Oak Ave., LaPlata, MD 20646	1	0.02					Mini-Park	Town of La Plata																																		Redwood Manor Sub.									
Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool	3000 Chicamuxen Road, Indian Head	10	8					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.						2	1		1				6	2																					High School with indoor pool								
Hughesville Pond Fish Management Area	Route 5, Hughesville, MD	8					3	State Fish Management Area	State		15																																	Fishing pond								
Indian Creek NRMA	17823 Prince Frederick Rd, Hughesville, MD 20637	9					659	Natural Resource Mgmt. Area	State																																			Forest and hunting area. Formerly Patuxent River NRMA								
Indian Head ES	4200 Indian Head Highway Indian Head, MD 20640	7	3					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.					1				1																																		
Indian Head Rail Trail	10390 Theodore Green Blvd • White Plains	6&7	160					Special Use Area	County																																											
Indian Head Village Green and Senior Center	101 Walter Thomas Rd, Indian Head, MD	7	11					Community Park	Town of Indian Head																																											
J.C. Parks ES	3505 Livingston Rd, Indian Head, MD 20640	7	1					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.									1																																		
James Craik Elementary School	7725 Marshall Corner Rd, Pomfret, MD 20675	6	8					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.						2																																					
John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School	3165 John Hanson Drive Waldorf, MD 20601	6	14					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.				1	4		2		2	2		3																									Hanson Middle is also a satellite community center						
La Plata HS & Pool and Matula Elem. School	6035 Radio Station Road, LaPlata	1	54	21				School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.						6	5		4	4		4	3																									Swimming pool (outdoors)					
La Plata Park (Legion Fields)	9115 Hawthorne Rd, La Plata, MD	1			32			Special Use Area	Private						2																																Hawthorn Road					
La Plata Farm Park	7110 St. Mary's Ave., La Plata, MD	1	54					Community Park	County																																								Undeveloped located south -St. Mary's Avenue			
Laurel Springs Park	5940 Radio Station Road, La Plata, MD 20646	6	199					Regional Park	County	2	1,000	14			10	7																																	Lighted athletic fields and natural areas			
Malcolm ES	14760 Poplar Hill Rd, Waldorf, MD 20601	8	10					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.								1	1	1	1		1																														
Mallows Bay Park	1440 Wilson Landing Road, Nanjemoy, MD 20662	3	25	160				Natural Resource Mgmt. Area	County		30	2																																						Total acres 509 county leases 185 acres Natural area, hunting, fishing. Total acres 509 county leases 185 acres.p/o Nanjemoy WMA		
Nanjemoy Wildlife Mgmt. Area (Wilson Landing Road)	1440 Wilson Landing Road, Nanjemoy, MD 20662	3					324	Natural Resource Mgmt. Area	State																																											
Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility	1005 Marshall Hall Road. Bryans Road, MD	7	4.3					Special Use Area	Federal																			2		5	0.25																		Boat launch in Piscataway Park. Managed, operated by Charles			
Mary Burgess Neal ES	12105 St Georges Dr, Waldorf, MD	6	13.2					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.						1		1		1																																	
Maryland Veterans Museum	11000 Crain Hwy, Newburg, MD	4	2					Special Use Area	Private																																									Old Glasva School		
Mason Springs Soft Access Area	Rt. 225 (Hawthorne Rd)/Rt 224, Indian Head, Nd 20640	7			3.7			Special Use Area	Private																																											Fishing and soft launch area

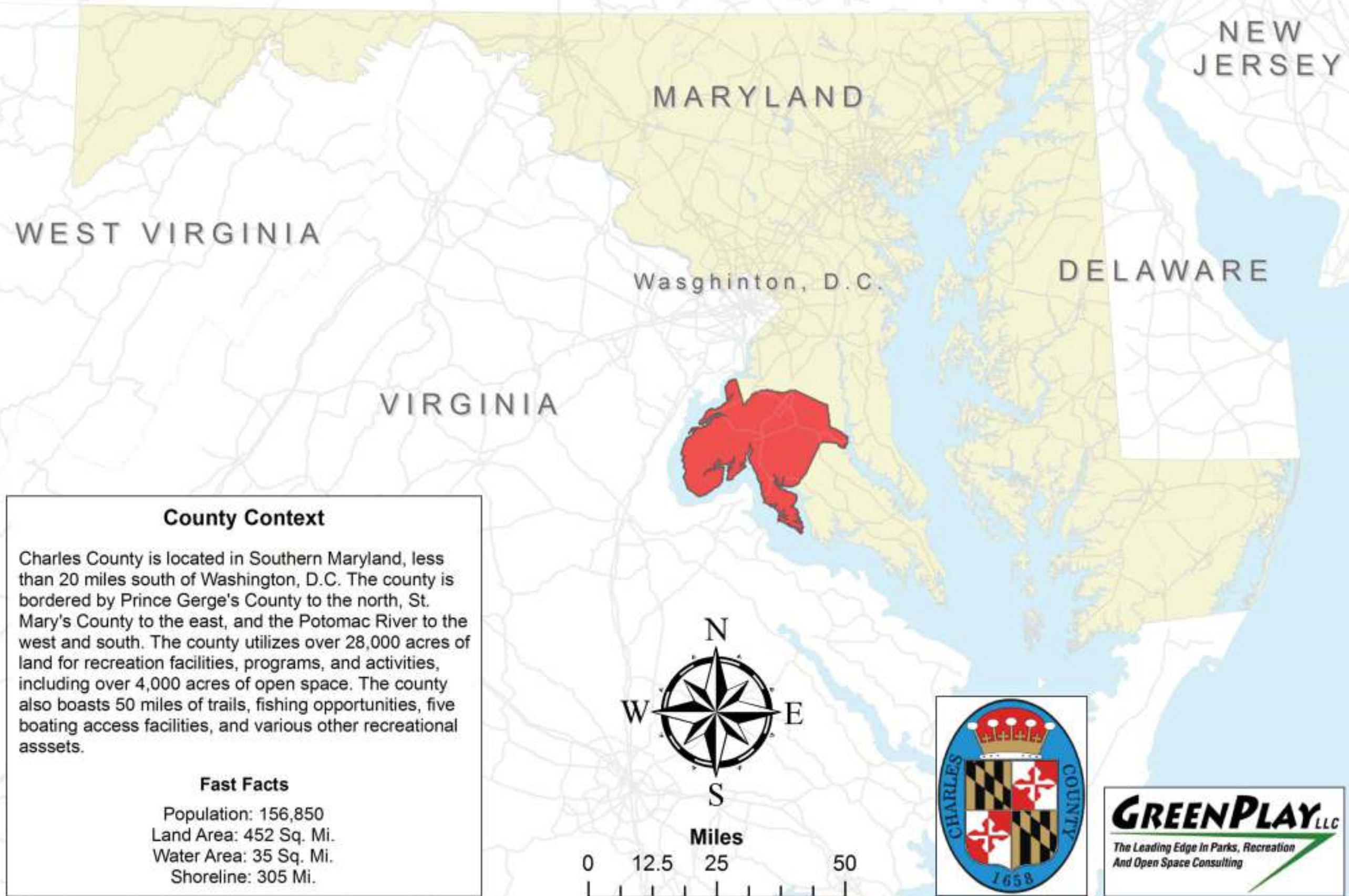
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										Concession Stand	Parking	Rest Rooms	Community Center	Athletic Fields - Baseball Practice Fields	Athletic Fields - Baseball Game Fields	Athletic Field - Multi-purpose	Athletic Fields - Other	Basketball Court (indoor-gym)	Basketball Court (outdoor)	Ice Rink	Court - Multi-purpose / Other	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Court (indoor-gym)	Beach Length (miles)	Boat Ramps (large)	Boat Ramps (small)	Boat Slips	Canoe & Kayak Water Trails (miles)	Pier	Shoreline (tidal, accessible) miles	Swim Pool outdoor	Swim Pool indoor	Camp Sites	Equestrian Center	Golf Course (public)	Hunting (Acres)		Outdoor Stadium Seats	Outdoor Theater Seats	Picnic Pavilion	Picnic Tables	Tot Lots / Play-ground	Trails - Hiking / Biking (miles)	Trails - Equestrian (miles)	Trails - Off-road Vehicles (miles)		
Mattawoman Middle School and Mattawoman Community Center	10145 Berry Road Waldorf, MD 20603	6	15					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.		24		1	3		1		1																								Also a satellite community center					
Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area	Route 224, Indian Head, MD 20646	7 & 10					2,506	Natural Environmental Area	State																																Natural areas, forest, wetlands, protected habitat						
Matthew Henson Middle School and Henson Community Center	3535 Livingston Rd, Indian Head, MD 20640	7	15					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.				1		5	1		1	1			2																				Also a satellite community center					
Mattingly Park	105 Mattingly Ave., Indian Head, MD	7	5					Community Park	Town of Indian Head																																						
Maurice McDonough HS and Pool	7165 Marshall Corner Road, Pomfret	1	7					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.							3	2		1			6	2																				Swimming pool (outdoors)				
Maxwell Hall Park	6680 Maxwell Hall Drive, Hughesville, MD 20637	9	692					Regional Park	County leased		15																																Natural areas, trails, shoreline (leased from State)				
Meekins Mini-Park	Bland Dr, Indian Head, MD	7	1					Mini-Park	Town of Indian Head																																						
Milton M. Somers Middle School and Somers Community Center	300 Willow Lane LaPlata, MD 20646	1	38	56				School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.				1	3		4	1	1	1			4																						Also a Satellite Community Center			
Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES	9275 Ironsides Rd, Nanjemoy, MD	3	3					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.					1					1																												
Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area	5625 Myrtle Grove Rd. LaPlata, MD 20646	7					1,722	Wildlife Mgmt. Area	State		25																																	Natural area, hunting, fishing pond/stream , equestrian trails, 6-station shooting range			
Nanjemoy Community Center	4375 Port Tobacco Rd., Nanjemoy MD 20662	3	7					Community Park	County				1	1					1																										Recreation Center and Satellite Community Center		
Nanjemoy Community Park	Rt 6/Port Tobacco Rd, Nanjemoy, MD 20662(opposite Doncaster State Park)	3	108					Neighborhood Park	County																																			Undeveloped			
Nanjemoy Creek Preserve		3			2974			Special Use Area	Private																																				Natural resource land. Includes Heron Rookery.		
North Point High School & Community Pool	2500 Davis Road, Waldorf	6	47					School Rec. Park	Bd. of Ed.						5	2		3				12	3									1														High School with indoor pool	
Oak Ridge Park	13675 Oaks Road, Hughesville, MD 20637	8	173					Regional Park	County		450				6	1																															Athletic fields, natural areas, trails, equestrian trails, show and riding rings
Patuxent Court Mini-Park	Patuxent Ct., La Plata, MD 20646	1	0.3					Mini-Park	Town of La Plata																																						
Phoenix Run Park I	Caroline St and Cedar Ct, La Plata	1	0.7					Mini-Park	Town of La Plata																																						
Phoenix Run Park II	Caroline St and Cedar Ct, La Plata	1	0.2					Mini Park	Town of La Plata																																						
Pinefield Future School Site	Josephine Rd, Waldorf, MD 20601	8	21					Undeveloped Park	Bd. of Ed.																																				Possible future school site		
Pinefield Park	2245 Pinefield Dr, Waldorf, MD 20601	8	20					Community Park	County					1		1	1		1																												
Pirates Dens Marina	12364 Neale Sound Rd, Cobb Island, MD	5			1			Special Use Area	Private																																						
Piscataway Park	3400 Bryan Point Rd., Accokeek, MD 20607	7				659		Historic & Cultural Area	Federal		50																																			Shoreline resource	
Pisgah Park	6645 Mason Springs Road, La Plata, MD 20646	9	234					Regional Park	County	1	200	8			3	1	4																													1 lit football field, 3 soccer, 1 soccer/baseball overlay	
Pomfret Park	W Rt 227, Pomfret, MD 20677	7	60.6	141				Community Park	County																			</																			

Appendix E: Full Sized Maps

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County Context

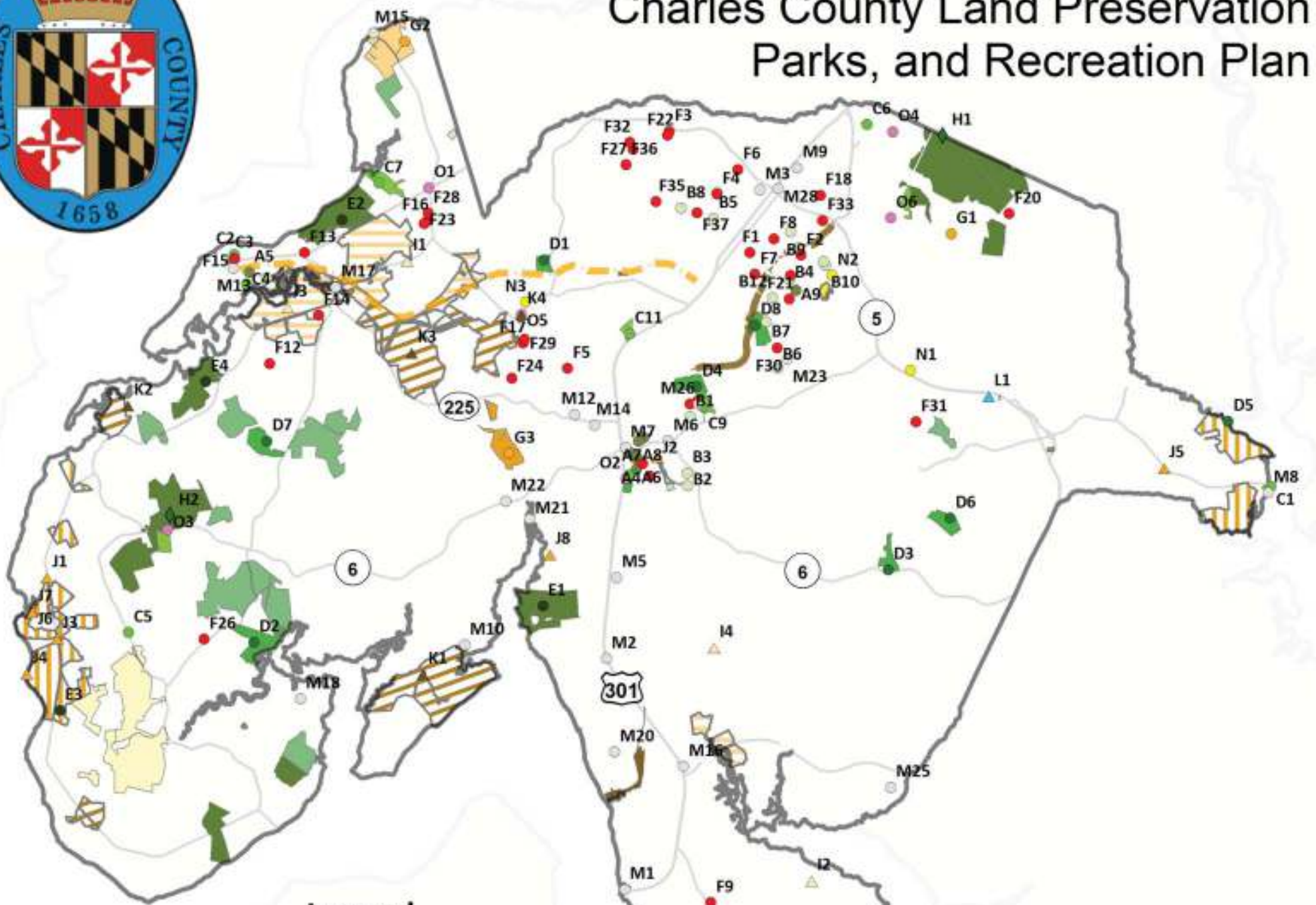
Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan





Parks and Recreation Sites

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

Land Classification

- Sports Complex
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- State Park
- Historical/Cultural
- National Historic Site
- Forest Management Area
- Natural Resource Area
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Mgmt. Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- Fish Management Area
- Nature Conservancy
- Rail Trail
- Special Use Area

Site Classification

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- State Park
- School Rec. Park
- Historic & Cultural Area
- State Forest
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Areas
- Wildlife Mgmt. Area
- State Fish Management Area
- Special Use Area
- Sports Complex
- Undeveloped Park
- Major Roads

Trails

- Indian Head Rail Trail
- St. Charles Parkway



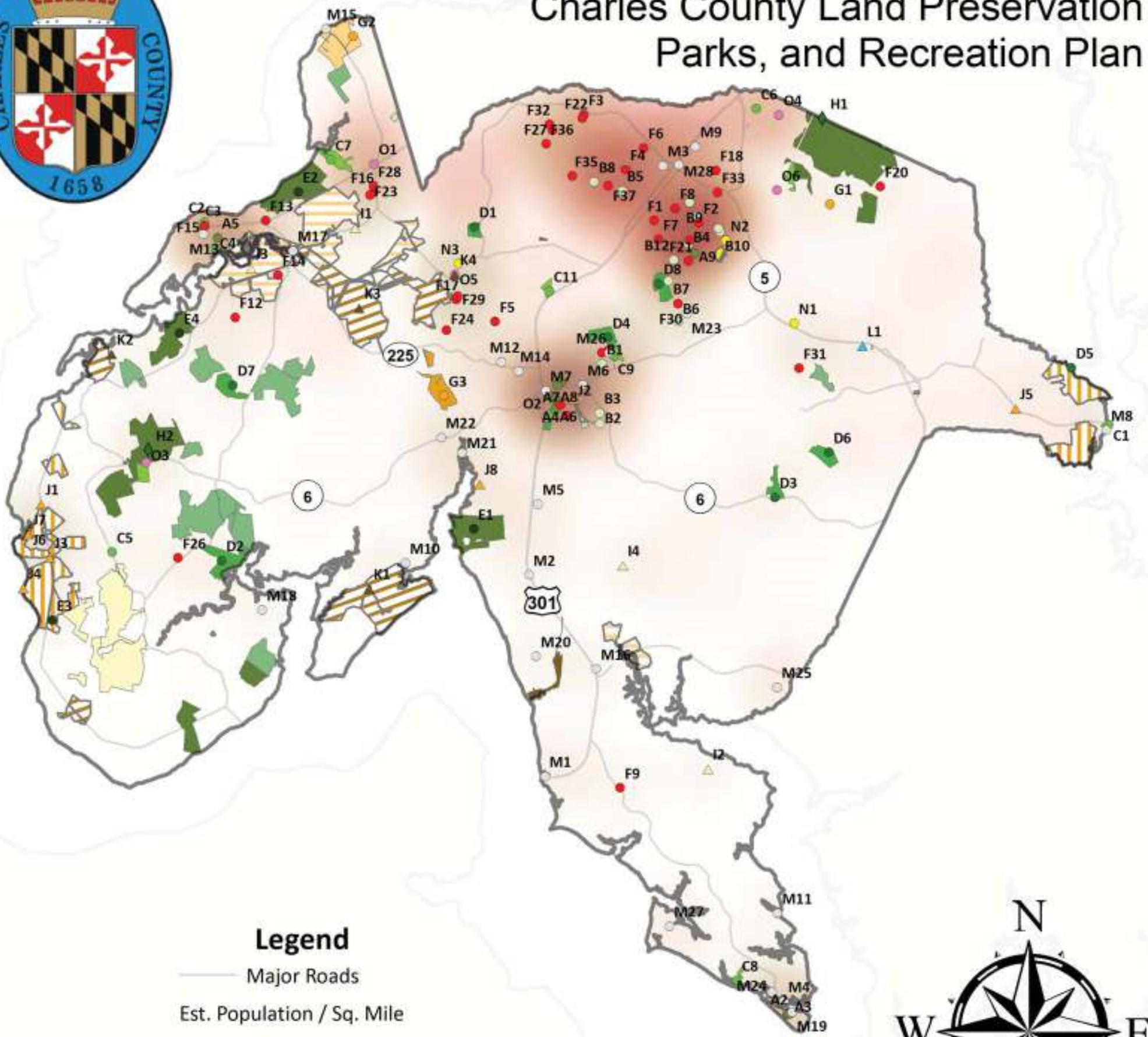
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P&R and Population Overlay

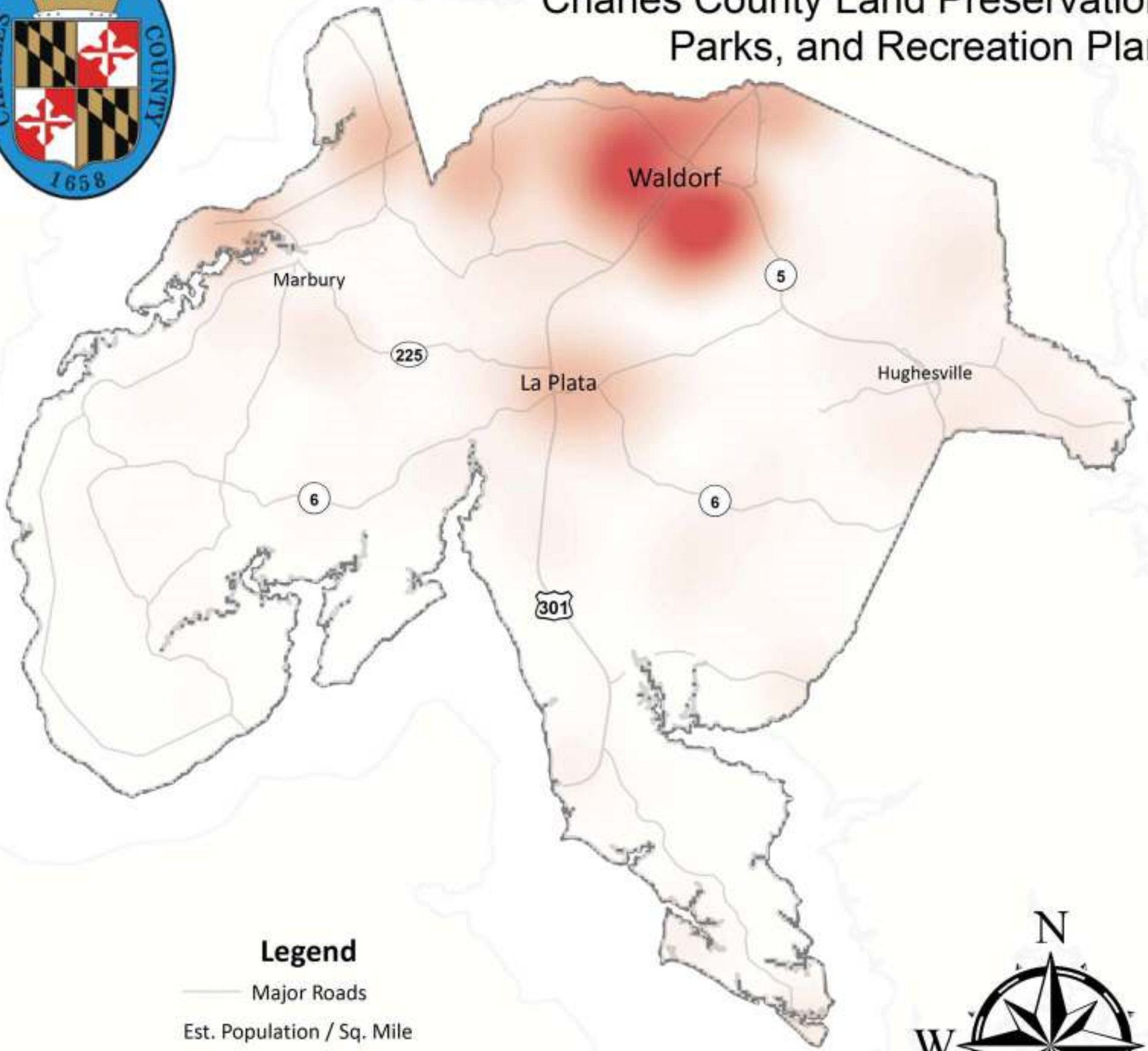
Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan





Population Density

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan







GREENPLAY LLC
The Leading Edge in Parks, Recreation
And Open Space Consulting

Parks and Recreation Inventory

Parks

Mini Park

A1 - Carroll La Plata Village
A2 - Cobb Island Park
A3 - Cobb Island Playground
A4 - Hemlock Court
A5 - Meekins
A6 - Patuxent Court Mini-Park
A7 - Phoenix Run Park I
A8 - Phoenix Run Park II
A9 - St. Charles - St. Paul's Lake
A10 - Star Memorial Garden
A11 - Train Station

Neighborhood

B1 - Agricopia Park
B2 - Redwood Lake
B3 - Silver Linden Park
B4 - St. Charles - Bannister Neighborhood Center
B5 - St. Charles - Dorchester Community Center
B6 - St. Charles - Fieldside Community Center
B7 - St. Charles - Gleneagles Community Center
B8 - St. Charles - Hampshire Community Center
B9 - St. Charles - Huntington Community Ctr.
B10 - St. Charles - Lambeth Hill Lake
B11 - St. Charles - Lancaster Community Center
B12 - St. Charles - Sheffield Community Center
B13 - St. Charles - Wakefield Community Ctr.
B14 - St. Charles - Wakefield Lake
B15 - Woodland Village Neighborhood Park

Community

C1 - Benedict Community Park
C2 - Charlie Wright Park
C3 - Indian Head Village Green and Senior Center
C4 - Mattingly Park
C5 - Nanjemoy Community Center
C6 - Pinefield Park
C7 - Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park
C8 - Southern Park
C9 - Tilghman Lake Park
C10 - Town Hall Park
C11 - Turkey Hill Park
C12 - Wills Memorial Park

Regional

D1 - Bensville Park
D2 - Friendship Farm Park
D3 - Gilbert Run Park
D4 - Laurel Springs Park
D5 - Maxwell Hall Park
D6 - Oak Ridge Park
D7 - Pisgah Park
D8 - White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E1 - Chapel Point State Park
E2 - Chapman State Park
E3 - Purse State Park
E4 - Smallwood State Park

Public School Recreation Areas

F1 - Arthur Middleton ES
F2 - Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert Community Center
F3 - Berry ES
F4 - C. Paul Barnhart ES
F5 - College of Southern Maryland
F6 - Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES
F7 - Dr. Gustavus Brown ES
F8 - Dr. Samuel Mudd ES
F9 - Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center
F10 - Eva Turner ES
F11 - F.B. Gwynn Center
F12 - Gale Bailey ES
F13 - General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center
F14 - Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool
F15 - Indian Head ES
F16 - J.C. Parks ES
F17 - James Craik ES
F18 - John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School
F19 - La Plata HS & Pool and Matula ES
F20 - Malcolm ES
F21 - Mary Burgess Neal ES
F22 - Mattawoman MS and Mattawoman Community Center
F23 - Matthew Henson MS and Henson Community Center
F24 - Maurice McDonough HS and Pool
F25 - Milton M. Somers MS and Somers Community Center
F26 - Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES
F27 - North Point HS & Community Pool
F28 - Pomonkey Soccer Complex
F29 - Robert D. Stethem Educational Center
F30 - St. Charles HS & Community Pool
F31 - T.C. Martin ES
F32 - Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center
F33 - Thomas Stone HS and Pool
F34 - Walter J. Mitchell ES
F35 - Westlake HS
F36 - William A. Diggs ES
F37 - William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

Historic/Cultural

G1 - Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House
G2 - Piscataway Park
G3 - Thomas Stone National Landmark

State Forest

H1 - Cedarville State Forest
H2 - Doncaster State Forest

Natural Environmental Area

I1 - Governor Glendening Natural Environmental Area
I2 - Grove Natural Environmental Area
I3 - Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area
I4 - Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area

Natural Resource Area

J1 - Ben Doane Area - Nanjemoy WMA

J2 - Clark Run Natural Area
J3 - Douglas Point State NRMA
J4 - Douglass Point Special Recreation Area- BLM
J5 - Indian Creek NRMA
J6 - Mallovs Bay Park
J7 - Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area
J8 - Port Tobacco River Park

Wildlife Mgmt. Area

K1 - Cedar Point WMA
K2 - Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area
K3 - Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area
K4 - Pomfret Resource Area

State Fish Mgmt. Area

L1 - Hughesville Pond Fish Management Area

Special Use Area

M1 - Aqua Land Campgrounds and Marina
M2 - Bel Alton High School
M3 - Capital Clubhouse
M4 - Captain John's Marina
M5 - Charles County Fairgrounds
M6 - Clark Senior Center
M7 - Courthouse Soccer Field
M8 - Desoto/Benedict Marina, Inc.
M9 - Elite Gymnastics & Recreation Center
M10 - Goose Bay Marina and Campsites
M11 - Hatton Creek Boat Ramp
M12 - Hawthorne Country Club
M13 - Indian Head Rail Trail
M14 - La Plata Park (Legion Fields)
M15 - Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility
M16 - Maryland Veterans Museum
M17 - Mason Springs Soft Access Area
M18 - Nanjemoy Creek Preserve
M19 - Pirates Dens Marina
M20 - Pope's Creek Rail Trail
M21 - Port Tobacco Marina and Campground
M22 - Port Tobacco Recreation Center
M23 - Regency Stadium
M24 - Saunders Marina
M25 - Southern MD ATV Park
M26 - Spring Dell Center
M27 - Swann Point Golf Course
M28 - Waldorf Senior Center

Sports Complex

N1 - Bryantown Soccer Complex
N2 - Robert Stethem Park
N3 - Southern Md Youth Org Inc. Fields

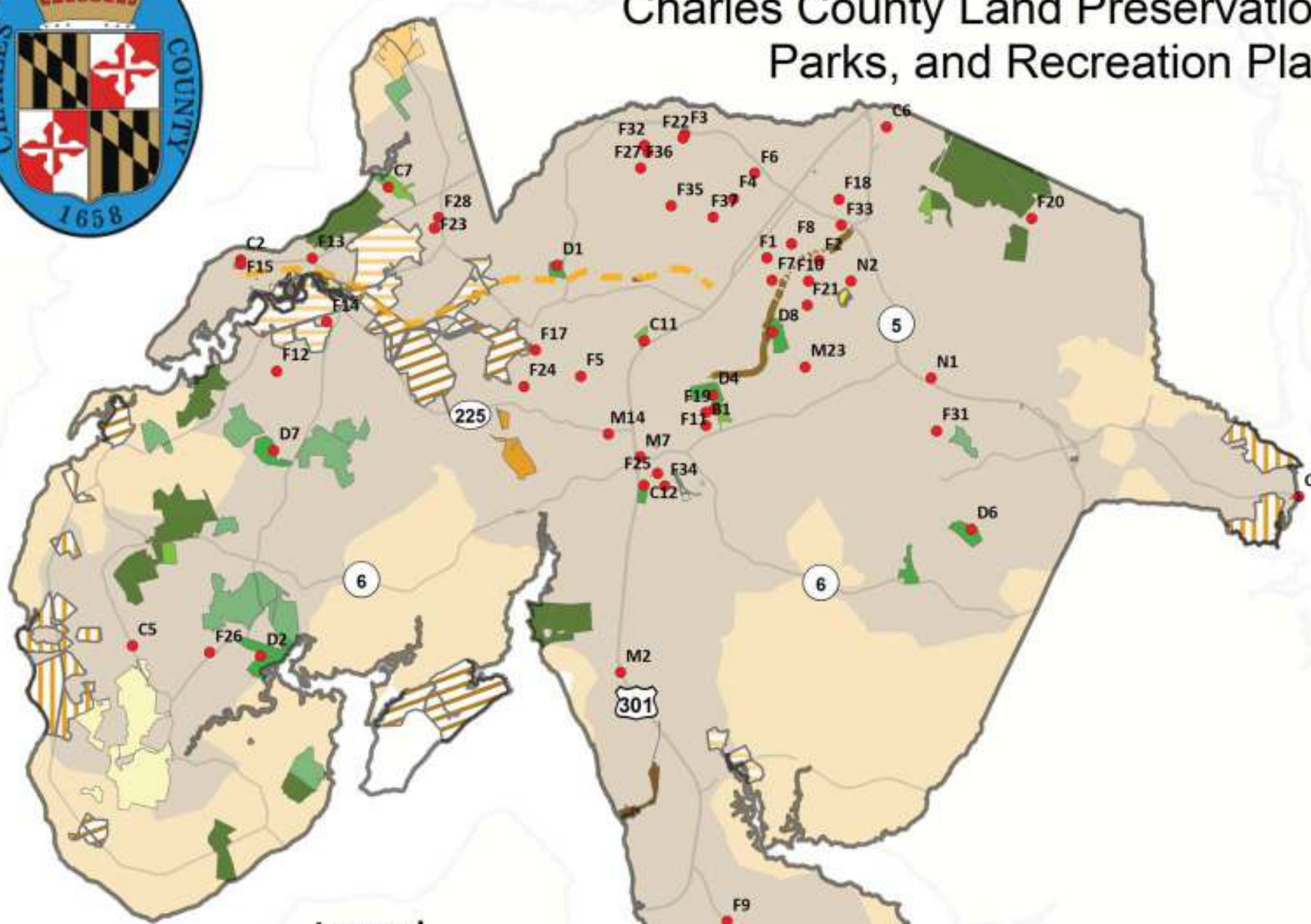
Undeveloped Park

O1 - Bryans Road Park
O2 - La Plata Farm Park
O3 - Nanjemoy Community Park
O4 - Pinefield Future School Site
O5 - Pomfret Park
O6 - Waldorf Park



Drive Time to Athletic Fields

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan

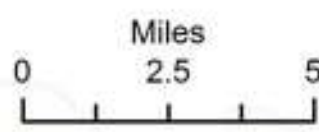


Legend

Land Classification

- Sports Complex
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- State Park
- Historical/Cultural
- National Historic Site
- Forest Management Area
- Natural Resource Area
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Mgmt. Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- Fish Management Area
- Nature Conservancy
- Rail Trail
- Special Use Area

- Athletic Fields
- Major Roads
- Trails
 - Indian Head Rail Trail
 - St. Charles Parkway
- Driving Distance
 - 10 minutes or less
 - 20 minutes or less
 - Greater than 20 minutes



Athletic Fields Inventory

Parks

Mini Park

A2 - Cobb Island Park

Neighborhood

B1 - Agricopia Park

Community

C1 - Benedict Community Park

C2 - Charlie Wright Park

C5 - Nanjemoy Community Center

C6 - Pinefield Park

C7 - Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park

C8 - Southern Park

C11 - Turkey Hill Park

C12 - Wills Memorial Park

Regional

D1 - Bensville Park

D2 - Friendship Farm Park

D4 - Laurel Springs Park

D6 - Oak Ridge Park

D7 - Pisgah Park

D8 - White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E1 - Chapel Point State Park

E2 - Chapman State Park

E3 - Purse State Park

E4 - Smallwood State Park

Public School Recreation Areas

F1 - Arthur Middleton ES

F2 - Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert
Community Center

F3 - Berry ES

F4 - C. Paul Barnhart ES

F5 - College of Southern Maryland

F6 - Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES

F7 - Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School

F8 - Dr. Samuel Mudd ES

F9 - Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS,
and Piccowaxen Community Center

F10 - Eva Turner ES

F11 - F.B. Gwynn Center

F12 - Gale Bailey ES

F13 - General Smallwood MS and Smallwood
Community Center

F14 - Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool

F15 - Indian Head ES

F17 - James Craik Elementary School

F18 - John Hanson MS & Community Center &
JP Ryon School

F19 - La Plata HS & Pool and Matula Elem.
School

F20 - Malcolm ES

F21 - Mary Burgess Neal ES

F22 - Mattawoman Middle School and
Mattawoman Community Center

F23 - Matthew Henson Middle School and
Henson Community Center

F24 - Maurice McDonough HS and Pool

F25 - Milton M. Somers Middle School and
Somers Community Center

F26 - Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES

F27 - North Point High School & Community
Pool

F28 - Pomonkey Soccer Complex

F31 - T.C. Martin ES

F32 - Theodore G. Davis MS & Community
Center

F33 - Thomas Stone HS and Pool

F34 - Walter J. Mitchell ES

F35 - Westlake HS

F36 - William A. Diggs ES

F37 - William B. Wade ES and Wade Community
Center

Special Use Area

M2 - Bel Alton High School

M7 - Courthouse Soccer Field

M14 - La Plata Park (Legion Fields)

M23 - Regency Stadium

Sports Complex

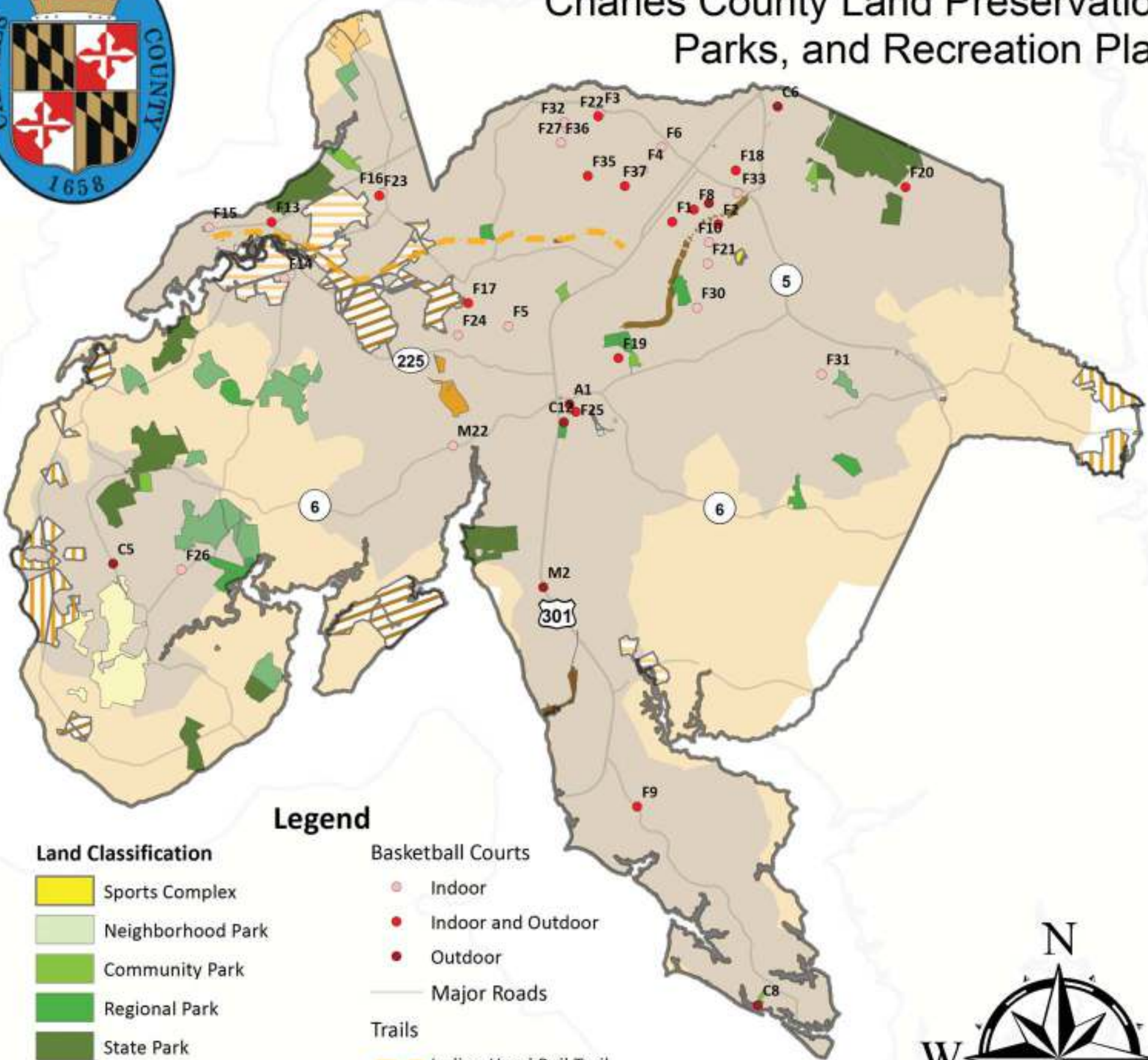
N1 - Bryantown Soccer Complex

N2 - Robert Stethem Park



Drive Time to Basketball Courts

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

Land Classification

- Sports Complex
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
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- Historical/Cultural
- National Historic Site
- Forest Management Area
- Natural Resource Area
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Mgmt. Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- Fish Management Area
- Nature Conservancy
- Rail Trail
- Special Use Area

Basketball Courts

- Indoor
- Indoor and Outdoor
- Outdoor

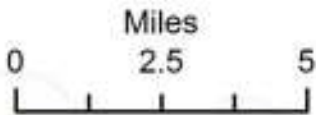
Major Roads

Trails

- Indian Head Rail Trail
- St. Charles Parkway

Driving Distance

- 10 minutes or less
- 20 minutes or less
- Greater than 20 minutes



Basketball Court Inventory

Parks

Mini Park

A1 - Carroll La Plata Village

Neighborhood

B10 - St. Charles - Huntington Community Ctr.

Community

C5 - Nanjemoy Community Center

C6 - Pinefield Park

C8 - Southern Park

C12 - Wills Memorial Park

Public School Recreation Areas

F1 - Arthur Middleton ES

F2 - Benjamin Stoddert MS and Stoddert Community Center

F3 - Berry ES

F4 - C. Paul Barnhart ES

F5 - College of Southern Maryland

F6 - Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer ES

F8 - Dr. Samuel Mudd ES

F9 - Dr. Thomas Higdon ES & Piccowaxen MS, and Piccowaxen Community Center

F10 - Eva Turner ES

F13 - General Smallwood MS and Smallwood Community Center

F14 - Henry E. Lackey HS & Community Pool

F15 - Indian Head ES

F16 - J.C. Parks ES

F17 - James Craik Elementary School

F18 - John Hanson MS & Community Center & JP Ryon School

F19 - La Plata HS & Pool and Matula Elem. School

F20 - Malcolm ES

F21 - Mary Burgess Neal ES

F22 - Mattawoman Middle School and Mattawoman Community Center

F23 - Matthew Henson Middle School and Henson Community Center

F24 - Maurice McDonough HS and Pool

F25 - Milton M. Somers Middle School and Somers Community Center

F26 - Mt. Hope-Nanjemoy ES

F27 - North Point High School & Community Pool

F30 - St. Charles HS & Community Pool

F31 - T.C. Martin ES

F32 - Theodore G. Davis MS & Community Center

F33 - Thomas Stone HS and Pool

F35 - Westlake HS

F36 - William A. Diggs ES

F37 - William B. Wade ES and Wade Community Center

Special Use Area

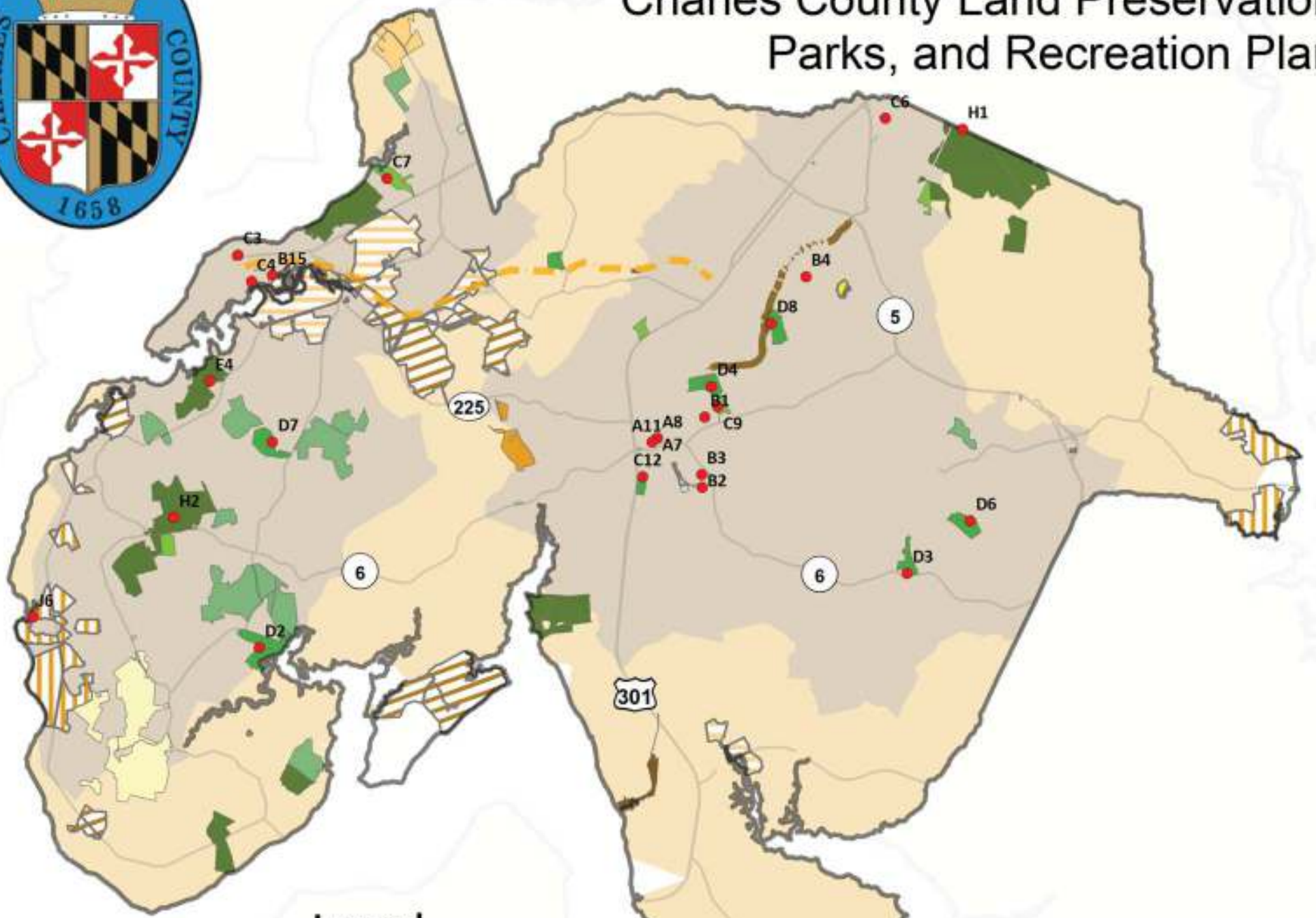
M2 - Bel Alton High School

M22 - Port Tobacco Recreation Center



Drive Time to Picnic Sites

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

Land Classification

- Sports Complex
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
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- State Park
- Historical/Cultural
- National Historic Site
- Forest Management Area
- Natural Resource Area
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Mgmt. Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- Fish Management Area
- Nature Conservancy
- Rail Trail
- Special Use Area

- Picnic Sites
- Major Roads
- Trails
 - Indian Head Rail Trail
 - St. Charles Parkway
- Driving Distance
 - 10 minutes or less
 - 20 minutes or less
 - Greater than 20 minutes



Miles
0 2.5 5



Picnic Site Inventory

Parks

Mini Park

A7 - Phoenix Run Park I

A8 - Phoenix Run Park II

A11 - Train Station

Neighborhood

B1 - Agricopia Park

B2 - Redwood Lake

B3 - Silver Linden Park

B4 - St. Charles - Bannister Neighborhood
Center

B15 - Woodland Village Neighborhood Park

Community

C3 - Indian Head Village Green and Senior
Center

C4 - Mattingly Park

C6 - Pinefield Park

C7 - Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park

C8 - Southern Park

C9 - Tilghman Lake Park

C12 - Wills Memorial Park

Regional

D2 - Friendship Farm Park

D3 - Gilbert Run Park

D4 - Laurel Springs Park

D6 - Oak Ridge Park

D7 - Pisgah Park

D8 - White Plains Regional Park & Golf Course

State

E4 - Smallwood State Park

State Forest

H1 - Cedarville State Forest

H2 - Doncaster State Forest

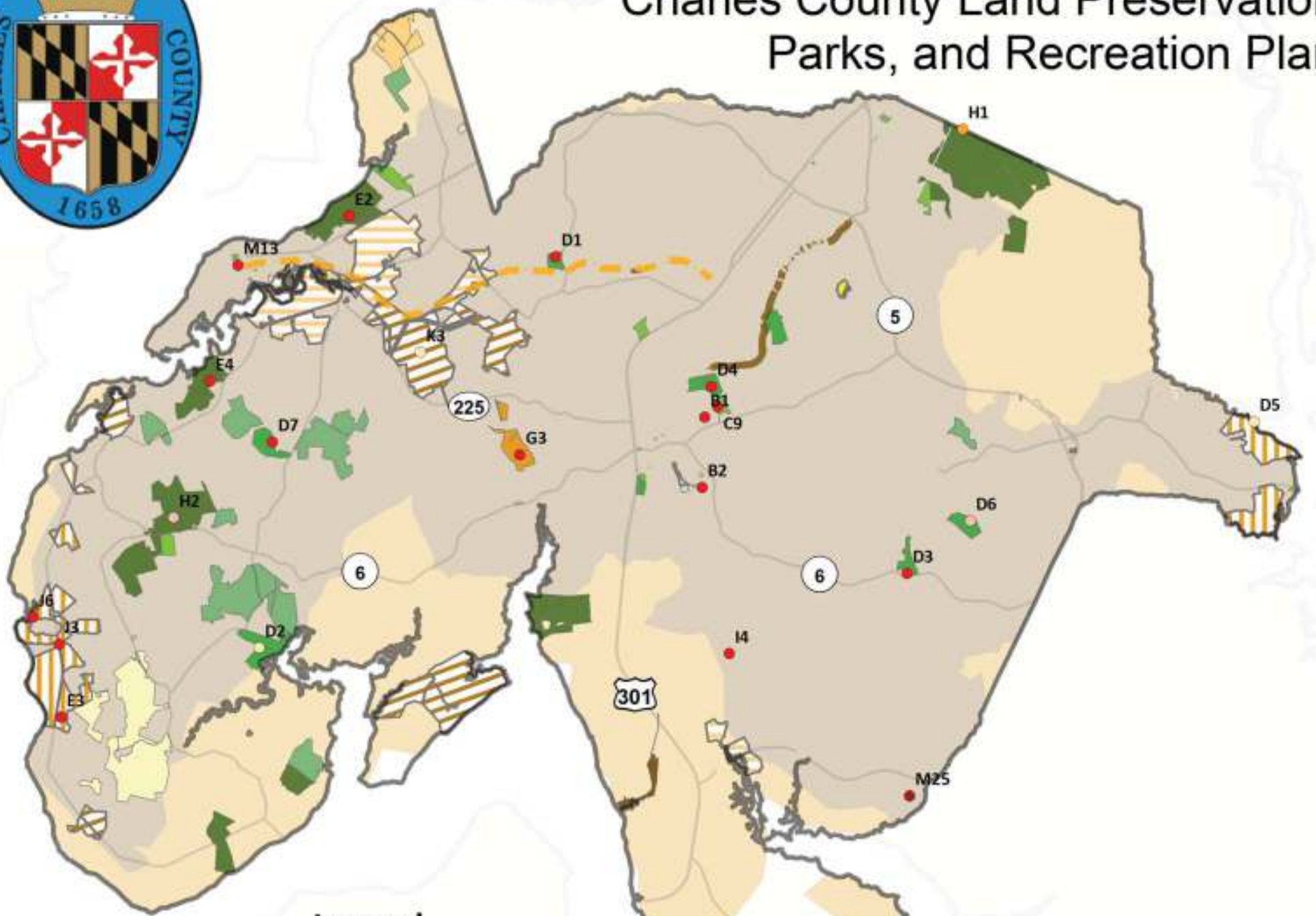
Natural Resource Areas

J6 - Mallows Bay Park



Drive Time to Trails

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



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Land Classification

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- National Historic Site
- Forest Management Area
- Natural Resource Area
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Mgmt. Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- Fish Management Area
- Nature Conservancy
- Rail Trail
- Special Use Area

Sites with Trails

- Equestrian
- Hiking/Biking
- Off-Road Vehicles
- Hiking/Biking and Equestrian
- Equestrian and Off-Road Vehicles
- Major Roads

Trails

- Indian Head Rail Trail
- St. Charles Parkway

Driving Distance

- 10 minutes or less
- 20 minutes or less
- Greater than 20 minutes



Trails Inventory

Parks

Neighborhood

B1 - Agricopia Park

B2 - Redwood Lake

Community

C9 - Tilghman Lake Park

Regional

D1 - Bensville Park

D2 - Friendship Farm Park

D3 - Gilbert Run Park

D4 - Laurel Springs Park

D5 - Maxwell Hall Park

D6 - Oak Ridge Park

D7 - Pisgah Park

State

E2 - Chapman State Park

E3 - Purse State Park

E4 - Smallwood State Park

Historic/Cultural

G3 - Thomas Stone National Landmark

State Forest

H1 - Cedarville State Forest

H2 - Doncaster State Forest

Natural Environmental Area

I4 - Zekiah Swamp Natural Environmental Area

Natural Resource Areas

J3 - Douglas Point State NRMA

J6 - Mallows Bay Park

Wildlife Mgmt. Area

K3 - Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area

Special Use Area

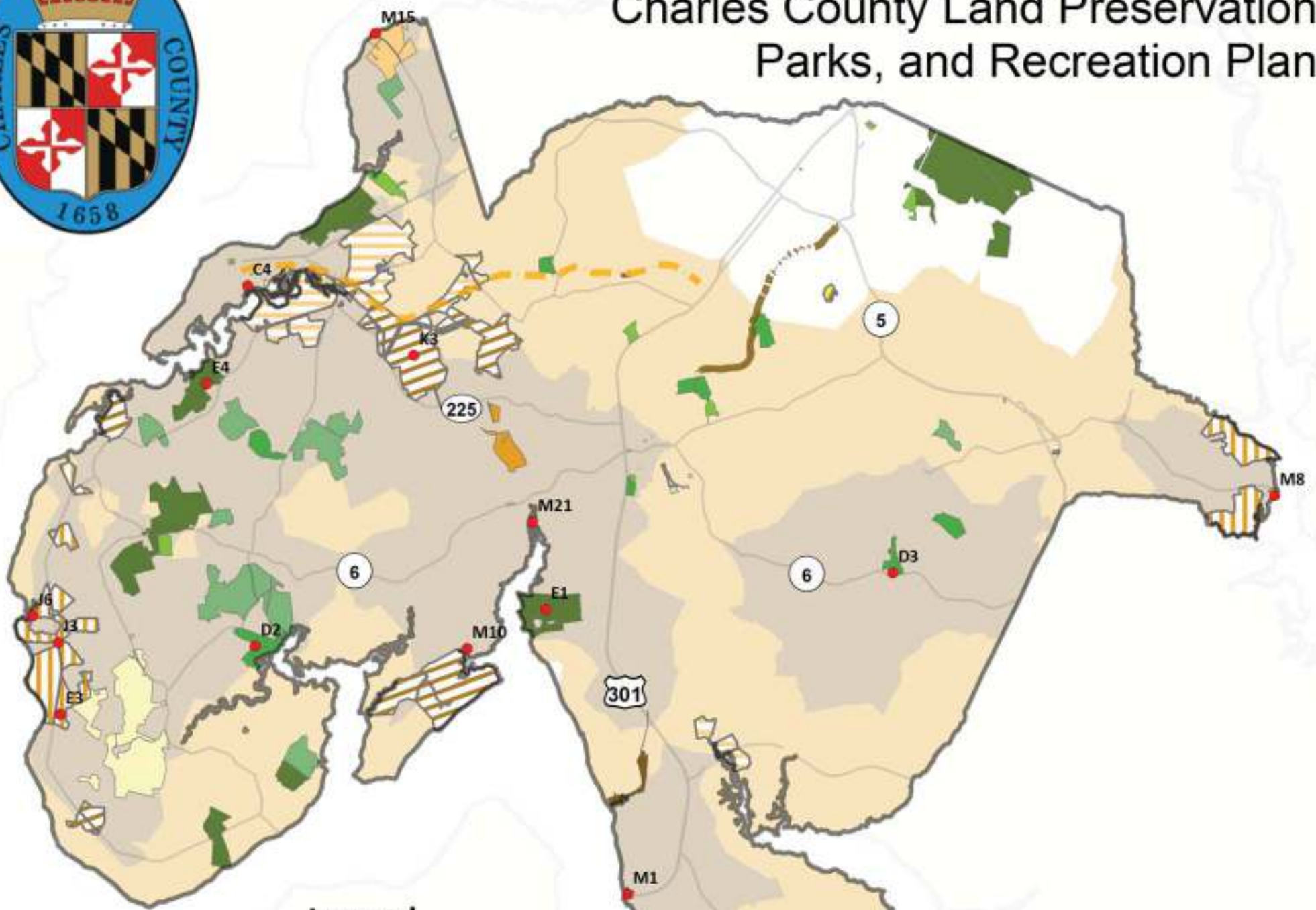
M13 - Indian Head Rail Trail

M25 - Southern MD ATV Park



Drive Time to Water Access

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

Land Classification

- Sports Complex
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- State Park
- Historical/Cultural
- National Historic Site
- Forest Management Area
- Natural Resource Area
- Natural Environmental Area
- Natural Resource Mgmt. Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- Fish Management Area
- Nature Conservancy
- Rail Trail
- Special Use Area

- Water Access
- Major Roads
- Trails
 - Indian Head Rail Trail
 - St. Charles Parkway
- Driving Distance
 - 10 minutes or less
 - 20 minutes or less
 - Greater than 20 minutes



Miles
0 2.5 5



Water Access Inventory

Parks

Community

C4 - Mattingly Park

C8 - Southern Park

Regional

D2 - Friendship Farm Park

D3 - Gilbert Run Park

State

E1 - Chapel Point State Park

E3 - Purse State Park

E4 - Smallwood State Park

Natural Resource Areas

J3 - Douglas Point State NRMA

J6 - Mallows Bay Park

Wildlife Mgmt. Area

K3 - Myrtle Grove Wildlife Mngmt. Area

Special Use Area

M1 - Aqua Land Campgrounds and Marina

M4 - Captain John's Marina

M8 - Desoto/Benedict Marina, Inc.

M10 - Goose Bay Marina and Campsites

M11 - Hatton Creek Boat Ramp

M15 - Marshall Hall Boat Launch Facility

M19 - Pirates Dens Marina

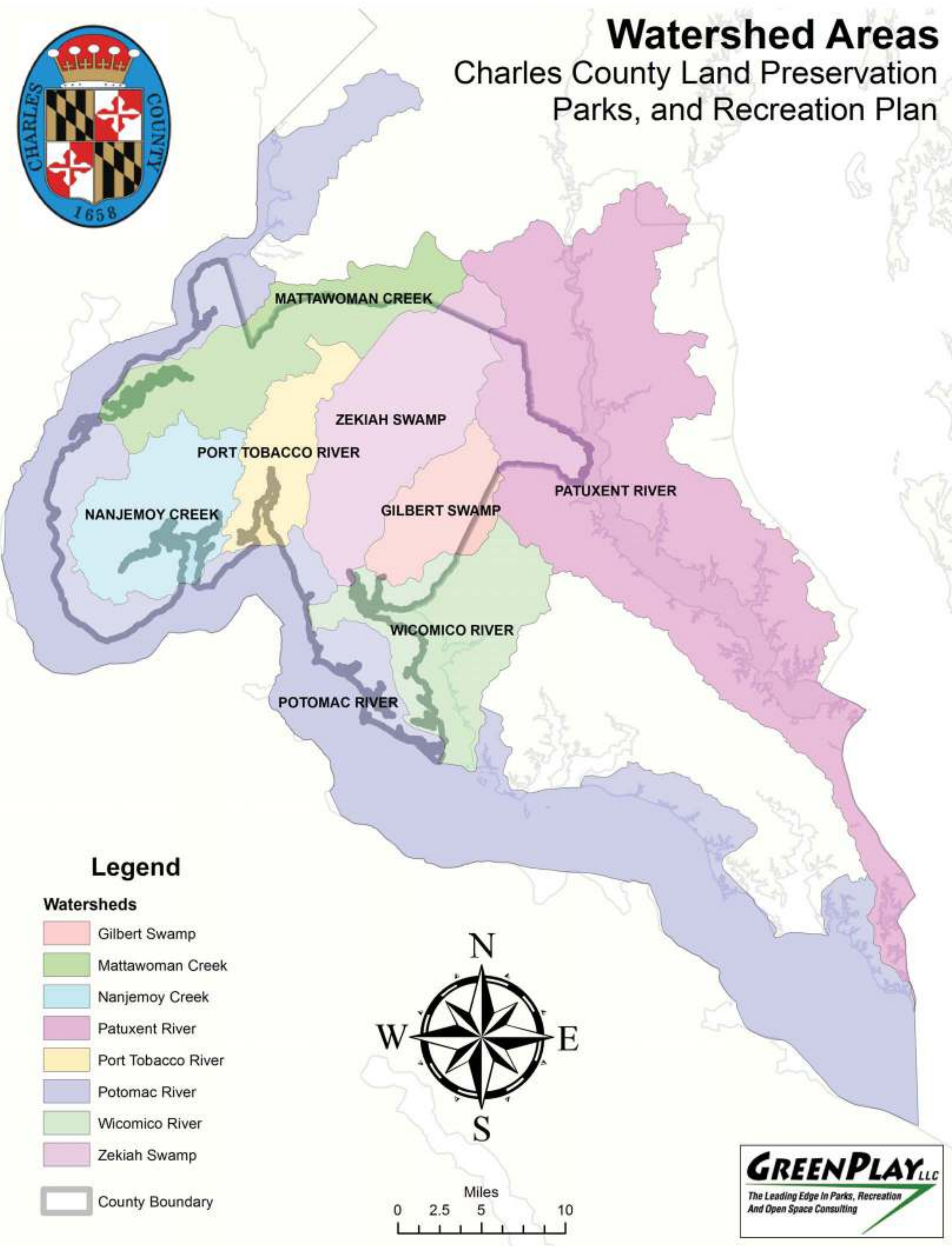
M21 - Port Tobacco Marina and Campground

M24 - Saunders Marina



Watershed Areas

Charles County Land Preservation Parks, and Recreation Plan



Legend

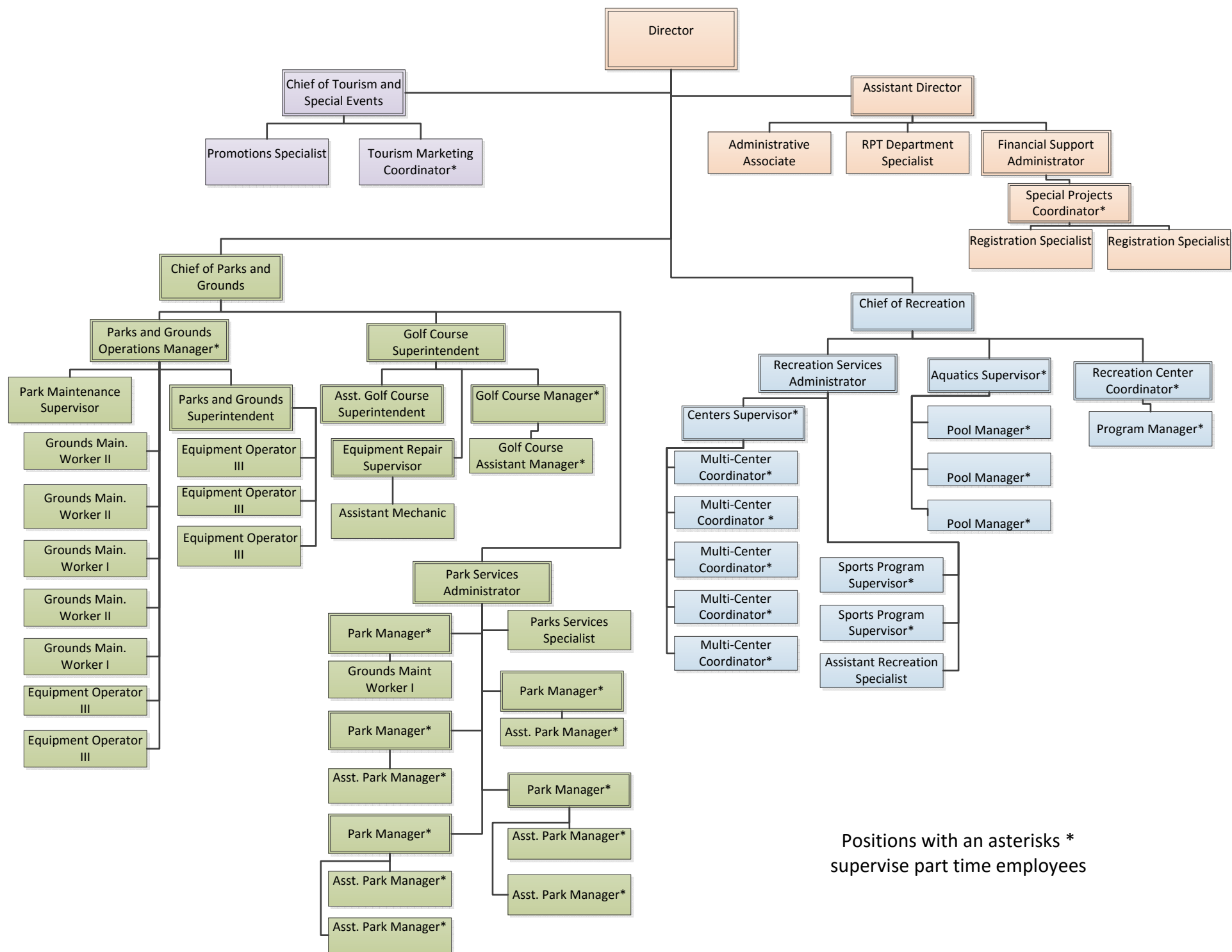
Watersheds

- Gilbert Swamp
- Mattawoman Creek
- Nanjemoy Creek
- Patuxent River
- Port Tobacco River
- Potomac River
- Wicomico River
- Zekiah Swamp

County Boundary

Appendix F: Department Organizational Chart

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Appendix G: Statewide Goals

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Appendix G: Statewide Goals for Parks and Land Preservation

State Goals for Parks and Recreation

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work, play and visit.
- Use state investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

State Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production;
- Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources, and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland;
- To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources, and resource-based industries;
- Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries;
- Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating state agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs;
- Work with local governments to achieve the following:
 - Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and compliment state goals;
 - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural land owners, the public, and state and local government officials;
 - Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs;
 - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas;
 - Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and public-at-large.

State Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

- Identify, protect, and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:

- Public land acquisition and stewardship;
- Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;
- Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;
- Support incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands;
- Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publically funded infrastructure development projects; and
- Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.
- Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).
- Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.).
- Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.
- Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.
- Assess the combined ability of the state and local programs to achieve the following:
 - Expand and connect forests, farmland, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure;
 - Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations;
 - Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve, and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions;
 - Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and
 - Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.